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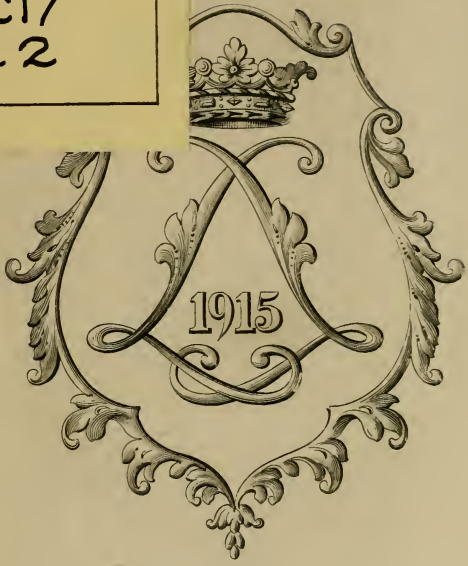

CAPRICE:

OR

ANECDOTES

OF

THE LISTOWEL FAMILY.

Howlett and Brimmer, Printers,
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ANECDOTES

OF

THE LISTOWEL FAMILY.

AN IRISH NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES,

By an Unknown.

..... All made of fantasy,
All made of passions, and all made of wishes.
Shakspeare.

VOL. II.

London;
SHERWOOD, JONES AND CO. PATERNOSTER ROW,
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1824.

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CAPRICE.

CHAPTER I.

Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.

GOLDSMITH.

AT about eight o'clock the following morning, Louisa was awoke by a rough salutation from Judy, who stood at the foot of her bed, roaring out—"Miss *Lowsy!* Miss *Lowsy!* will you lie sleeping there all day? Your sweetheart has been walking by the lake this hour. A pretty thing if he throws himself in for grief at your not appearing! Indeed he all as one as said as much; and *axed*

me if I *bees* your servant; but I *tould* him flat as how I *bees* nobody's servant, excepting, do you see, I *sarved* them for mere love and affection. After that fashion I am your servant since I was no bigger than a *twopenny pipkin*, and for certain, I may say, we *knowed* each other since we were born. But that's true—*Aba-boo!* Miss! did you hear of the *pullalue* was in the house yesterday?"—continued Judith, with a contemptuous smile.

"What was the matter?" asked Louisa.

"Did you not hear?" replied Judith. "Ah! its long, Miss *Lowsy*, before you would make such a work for a sweetheart—or poor I, even, that should not have pride, like a lord's daughter.—Is it I crying for Brian, if Brian tossed up his nose and left me?—No, I would hold up my head as high as ever—although my heart should burst with vexation." She drew herself up with an air, and her colour rose at the idea.

Louisa was highly amused. Judy always interested her, there was so much originality in her manner; or whether it was her extreme beauty, which, accompanied with a certain degree of wildness of expression, at once rivetted the attention.

"But as I was saying, Miss; she was bawling and crying for Villars!—he that never cast an eye on her! for sure, dear! 'tis yourself he admires of all the ladies he ever *seed!*—You *may'nt* believe me, if you choose, but I have it from Jack, who overheard him a-telling it to the *ould* mistress. The door was open, and Jack staid a-hearkening, while he made *blieve* he was dusting his reverence's coat.—'Well,' the parson said, 'its mighty fine talking! Miss Listowel thinks, as she is my lady's daughter, she can lay her finger on any man that is not *all entirely* one of the quality.—But our little rose-bud is preferred before her, although she has not a penny

of fortune. He *tould* me to-day of his love for our *Lowsy*, and that he wished to marry her out of hand, and set the good family here at rest, and prove to them he was not *amphibious!*'"

"Ambitious, you mean," said Louisa.

"Yes, that was the word," returned Judith.

"Good heavens! what further did my dear parents say?"

"I have *tould* you every word as I had it from Jack; only I left out the genteel expressions of 'pon my honour!' 'pon my credit!' and all that sort of thing: that does not sound well repeated by a chap with only a *praty* garden."

"You amaze me!" exclaimed Louisa.

"Not more than I did '*Square* Talbot; he made me repeat it over and over again, and asked me how you liked him? I said it was not for the *like of me* to be talking, but that his honour must consider this was a lone

place, and that if ne'er a more agreeable man offered, you would be a fool to stand *shilly-shally*. I winked, as much as to say, a word to the wise. He then asked me if Patrick Brian was not my sweetheart, and bid me be constant, and he would give me to Brian on whatever day he married himself, and would have a lady for me to 'tend. So now, Miss *Lowsy*, that's yourself! and you may from this out command my services.—See what *luck-penny* he has given me!—Look at this bright half-guinea; and this fine broach to wear in my *hankercher!*"

Louisa was now nearly dressed, when there was a gentle tap at the room-door; Judy opened it, and her quick look of surprise and pleasure told Brian was there. He came with a note from Talbot, requesting to see Louisa for a few minutes, as he was obliged to leave the Park early that day for Dublin. She must therefore pardon

his sending to her so early, as he had a great deal to say to her.

Louisa wrote hastily a line on a slip of paper, to say she would be down immediately; she soon made her toilette, and then humbly, on her knees, with Judy by her side, recommended herself and all those she loved to the care and mercy of her Creator, returning thanks for the many blessings she enjoyed.

When Judy rose from her knees, she exclaimed—"There then, God bless you, Miss *Lowsy!* I thinks I am always happier and better the day I pray by you; you draw my heart to goodness, and make me feel in earnest.—What a pity, *jewel!* you should not have the right faith. But notwithstanding what all the priests in the world say, I think the soul of such an angel must be saved, barring what you may suffer, dear, in purgatory!"

Louisa laughed, and hastened down

stairs to the study, where she found Talbot waiting for her. They went down the shrubbery walk, whilst he repeated all that Judy had told him concerning Villars' proposal. It filled him with alarm, as he dreaded Mr. Kelly's giving his rival the preference. He therefore entreated Louisa would give him a favourable answer, and not let their union depend on her guardian. This she positively refused: but endeavoured to raise his hopes, by telling him he need not fear trusting their happiness to one so entirely devoted to her.

Edward saw the lovers from a distance, and came to meet them. Talbot hoped in him he had found an auxiliary; but to his utter mortification he gave as his opinion, that his sister was perfectly right; and that she could not behave so undutifully, as to engage herself in marriage without even asking consent of one, that had ever treated

her with the care and affection of a parent. Talbot was obliged to give up, and be contented with her promising never to marry Villars. Edward laughed, and said he would not allow his sister to be so shackled.

They returned by the approach, and met Jackson, Edward's servant, returning with the tilbury. From several letters he handed one to Edward, who cast on it a look of haughty indignation; and hastily breaking the seal, read as follows:—

"What will you think of me for again "addressing you, after your so con- "temptuously returning my letter this "morning? I thought then I never "could forget the affront, or have any "communication with you by letter or "otherwise; but a drive of twenty-five "miles has given those angry sensations "time to subside; whilst the very "strong affection I bear you has pre-

" dominated over every other feeling:
" as a proof of which I again offer you
" the rejected letter. In it you will
" find my full vindication; and that
" your suspicions of my honour are
" equally unfounded and unjust. I shall
" await your answer in Dublin.

" I am convinced on reading the en-
" closed, you will have a proper sense
" of the injury you have done me; and
" feel (or I am very much mistaken in
" your character), anxiety equal to my
" own, to have every misunderstanding
" between us removed.

" I remain, dear Edward,
" Still with unabated affection,
" Yours,
" C. VILLARS."

The colour mounted in Edward's face. " Does he think," said he, with a look of the deepest resentment, " to satisfy me with fair speeches when there are such damning proofs against him? Has he not won her affections, and made her

come forward with a boldness foreign to her nature? Poor Mary was always as modest as she is beautiful!"

"Patience, my dear fellow! Read what he has to say for himself," said Talbot.

"I have no patience!" exclaimed Edward; "nor do I desire to have patience with such conduct. Read it, indeed!—No; I am sufficiently exasperated already, and do not wish to aggravate my feelings further by his flimsy excuses. No; I am for straight forward measures, and call actions by their right names! I shall never style a failure in respect to our family by any name less harsh than impertinence. He shall not, however, long be kept in suspense; this morning's post shall convey it to him in a blank cover."

"My dear Edward, you are decidedly wrong!—Listen to your friend—your brother!—It is my opinion you will find him innocent, from information I received this morning."

"What was it?—I am impatient to hear!" said the angry youth.

"This letter will explain all," returned Talbot.

"Well, since you insist on it, I will open it.—I detest a hypocrite!—Read it, Talbot."

Talbot read as follows:—

"DEAR EDWARD,

"I can hardly believe it possible that "I can be the object of those strange "looks that have this day clouded your "brow!—Why those haughty indig- "nant glances?—What have I done that "you should view me with an air of "such cold disdain?—changed only for "a look, at once sarcastic and contemp- "tuous!—Such is the weakness of "human nature, that those scornful "glances roused me more than all; and "now impel me to discover to you "what my friendship for you never did. "Know, thou proud boy! in point of

" family I am your equal!—and might
" have been so in point of fortune, had
" I remained with my family, and mar-
" ried to please them!—For this you
" have only my bare assertion; but,
" will you venture to question the vera-
" city of him who educated you; and
" who has ever treated you with the
" tenderness of a parent?

" I am accused of having gained your
" sister's affections, and of having basely
" taken advantage of the opportunity
" afforded me in capacity of tutor, to
" instil into her ductile mind a love for
" myself. I entirely disclaim such con-
" duct; which I grant, although my
" rank in life equals hers, would be vil-
" lainy in the extreme.

" To prove myself innocent of this
" accusation, I fortunately can bring for-
" ward more than bare assertion. Mr.
" Kelly can inform you that I waited on
" him yesterday morning, to beg his
" permission to pay my addresses to

" Miss Kelly, his fair relative; and apo-
" logized for being so premature in my
" offers. At present desiring no answer
" from the young lady, until I should be
" allowed time to gain her favour.

" To which he very candidly replied,
" that he feared I had little hope of suc-
" ceeding with his ward; and that my
" only chance was from not declaring
" myself too soon.

" I was extremely puzzled how to
" act, as I was most anxious your sister
" should know my views; and at length
" determined, that you should tell her
" in secresy, and request she would use
" her influence with Miss Kelly.

" Thus, all in my mind was arranged;
" when, unfortunately, your sister fan-
" cied her life in danger, and me her
" preserver:—you know what followed.
" The extreme gratitude of her nature
" she mistakes for a tenderer sentiment;
" at which her family are naturally in-
" dignant: and, forgetting the many

" years' trial they have have had of my
" conduct and principles, suddenly con-
" demn me as having acted the part of
" a seducer.

" I have long felt for you and your
" sister an affection truly parental. You
" have both been, now for many years,
" my companions—my friends! Early
" estranged by untoward circumstances
" from my own family, in yours I
" found the balm of friendship neces-
" sary to my wounded spirit.

" Observing in Mr. Listowel the most
" watchful solicitude for the improve-
" ment of his children, I felt satisfac-
" tion in meeting his wishes; and had
" the gratification of seeing my services
" duly appreciated. This softened the
" bitterness of dependance;—truly, I
" forgot it was such. Your father treated
" me as his most valued friend; and you
" were all plants of my own rearing.
" Every year was increasing my pros-
" pect of independence; as the salary

" your father so liberally allowed me, I
" mostly laid by, towards forming a sum
" for purchasing an annuity or a place,
" which I should require when my dear
" pupils were too old for tutelage.

" This was my plan: but I confess,
" since my short residence here, it has
" undergone a considerable change.

" Your sister I have always felt pecu-
" liarly interested for, as I should to-
" wards a favourite and beautiful
" child—somewhat spoiled it must be
" allowed; but with such rare talents,
" and such a sweet disposition, that I
" always regretted I had not the power
" of guiding her to solid attainments.
" That was not to be accomplished;—
" still her young mind thirsted for
" knowledge. She naturally turned to
" me as the person most inclined and
" most capable of gratifying her. She
" heard from me always the language of
" truth, frequently of reproach, and
" listened to me with the deepest atten-
" tion, making many promises of amend-

" ment; but she was too volatile, too
" little practised in self-denial to benefit
" much by my strictures. I soon per-
" ceived this, and with grief observed
" that she fancied me the object of her
" youthful imagination: it was merely
" a whim, which, I saw, if persisted in,
" would soon force me to seek another
" home.

" I was revolving this in my mind,
" when, on my first visit here, I saw
" Miss Kelly; and never, *since I became*
" *a wanderer*, was I so struck with any
" one! Her striking resemblance to your
" sister prepossessed me strongly in her
" favour. I soon discovered she had
" received the cultivation your sister
" wanted; and that she had uncommon
" strength of mind and steadiness of
" character.—I flattered myself from
" the seclusion in which she lived, that
" were I to propose myself, I should
" have no competitor; and that, per-
" haps, notwithstanding the disparity
" of our years, I might gain her con-

" sent; at all events, when my overture
" came to be spoken of, it would give a
" timely check to the idea I saw spring-
" ing up in your sister's mind. Accord-
" ingly, I waited on Mr. Kelly, and have
" told you the result.

" Now, I wish you to consider, my
" dear Edward! how unused your sister
" is to contradiction, or even to the
" slightest opposition to her wishes;
" therefore, in the present instance, her
" parents might surely withhold their
" consent, without expressions of so
" much indignation; and, without with-
" drawing their confidence in me, now
" tried for so many years. If they would
" allow me gently to convince her that
" my peace would not be endangered
" by her change of sentiment; and if
" they would allow me to converse with
" her, I would teach her a better know-
" ledge of her own heart; and show her,
" that with youthful enthusiasm she
" mistakes the feelings of generosity and
" gratitude for a tenderer sentiment.

" I shall await your answer in Dublin,
" where you may as usual direct to me.
" I remain yours, &c.
" C. VILLARS."

Edward listened in silence. The respect, the affection he was in the habit of feeling for Villars from his earliest infancy, at length subdued the impetuosity of his resentment—conviction flashed on his mind: he could not but believe Villars' assertion of his innocence; he pitied his misfortunes; admired his modesty and tenderness for his sister; all struck him, and he felt humbled and abashed that he could for a moment have allowed his irritable feelings so entirely to blind his judgment. He snatched the letter from Talbot, and turned into another walk, that he might unobserved peruse his injured friend's letter.

Talbot and Louisa talked of Villars with great commiseration; the former

deeply lamenting his misfortunes, for which he could now feel, as he no longer feared in him a rival.

They hastened to the house, as it was the breakfast hour. Talbot left her at the door, and went to the Glebe, from whence he promised to return and acquaint her with Mr. Kelly's answer. Poor Louisa felt very little hope; but this she concealed from Talbot, and hastened into the house lest she should betray her emotion.

CHAPTER II.

"In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*."

Louisa found the Listowels in the breakfast-room, who, much pleased by her attention to Mary, received her affectionately, and again requested she would not leave them whilst they remained at Listowel Park. They expected much from her good sense in influencing her young friend, who, Lady Elizabeth was sorry to tell her, had not slept all night—was ill—feverish, partly owing to the anxiety she felt for Jackson's return, as she expected he would bring some intelligence of Villars.

Louisa mentioned having seen him, but was silent respecting the letters;

and Listowel went to seek Jackson, to inquire from him where he left Villars, and if he had letters.

Lady Elizabeth, when left alone with Louisa, gave free vent to her grief, deploring her hard lot in having so degenerate a child. She wished, however, Listowel would consent to their union, as she could not bear to witness her unhappiness, which she feared would send her to an early grave.

They went together to the invalid's chamber. Louisa was very much shocked to find her so ill. Her mother thought her fever considerably increased, and therefore hesitated no longer in sending for Doctor Gorman.

Louisa took a seat by her bed-side: Mary inquired for Edward; on her mother's replying she had not seen him that morning, she was quite overcome; and said she knew he was gone in pursuit of Villars.

In vain they assured her of her bro-

ther's peaceable intentions; nothing could pacify her but their offer of sending for him.

In about half an hour he obeyed her summons; and told Lady Elizabeth that his father wished to speak to her; on which she quitted the room.

Edward seated himself on the bedside by Mary, and begged to know what she wanted with him.

She burst into tears; and said, she knew he sought Villars' life because she loved him.

He assured her no consideration should ever tempt him to raise his hand against Villars; and that she should meet with no opposition from him.

"Is it possible? my dearest brother! Have you heard from him? What has changed you?"

"What very probably may change you—a long letter from himself."

"Give it me! Let me read it!" said Mary, eagerly.

"Your father has it.—I have not the smallest objection to your reading it," returned Edward.

"You will make no opposition—no objection! So far your words are sweet, but your voice is bitter: and there is a coldness, a sullenness in your manner, that bodes me no good. Where is my father?"

"With my mother in the library: I am going to them," replied Edward.

"I want to see them," said Mary, impatiently.

"You must wait their pleasure. They desired they might not be interrupted," returned Edward.

"That sounds very awful! Do you think they are debating my case?"

"If you ask me any more questions I will leave you."

"How can you be so ill-natured, Edward! What has put you in this sullen mood?"

"Shame at your forwardness! How

can you expose yourself thus, for a man who has never declared himself your lover ?"

" If you only come here to lecture me, I think you had better go.—But," Mary added—" no—do stay ; I will listen to you, lest you should join the consultation in the study—and I feel my hopes rising fast, since they give my suit consideration.—I am such a favourite that they would not see me miserable. How very grave you look, Louisa!"

" I was thinking you have all those blessings I so much covet;—and yet, you are not much happier than I am." Louisa coloured, remembering that want of parents was a forbidden subject.

" What have I that you have not ?" asked Mary.

" A brother and a sister !"

" But," returned Mary, " did you not hear how ill-natured Edward was?"

"I did not think so. I thought neither seemed sufficiently considerate of the other, and not sensible of the goodness of Providence. I was thinking if I had such a brother—such a sister—how grateful I should be!"

Mary threw her arms around her neck; promised to love her always as a sister, and begged she would ever consider her as such.

Edward smiled: it gave him infinite pleasure to see Louisa thus ingrafting into their family. He put his arm round them, and thanked Louisa for her gentle reproof, promising in future to be the affectionate brother to both.

He then went to see what detained his father and his mother.

In about an hour he returned with Lady Elizabeth.

Mary looked anxiously at her mother, expecting to read her fate in her eyes; and in answer to her inquiries, assured her she was much better, but

complained heavily of not having seen her father. They replied, he had promised to see her after the arrival of Doctor Gorman.

"And has he not a letter from ——?" She stopped, her face was covered with blushes.

"Do not, my dearest child! allow your thoughts to wander. You know how anxious your father and I are for your happiness. Surely, you will not run any great risk in confiding in us."

Mary hoped the best from this; particularly as her mother seemed so patient, and did not now, absolutely, forbid her to think of Villars.

A letter was then handed to Louisa. It was from the curate; and, in order to escape from observation, she withdrew to read it. She had been expecting Talbot's return, and from his not appearing, dreaded this letter was to put an end to their happy prospects.

It ran as follows:—

"My Dear Child,

"I have much to say to you of great "import; yet I do not summons you "home, as your presence is so necessary "to your friends. I will therefore call "on you this evening, at seven o'clock, "and we may have half an hour's con- "versation. I persuaded Mr. Talbot "to go from this without again seeing "you;—but do not suppose I deprived "him of all hope. Time may do much "for you both.—When we meet, you "shall hear what my hopes, and what "my fears are.

"Heaven bless you, my dear child! "and believe me your

"Affectionate

"I Kelly."

This letter threw poor Louisa into the deepest despair; and now believing all chance of her ever being united to Talbot over, she wept bitterly, and whilst thus lamenting, Judy came to seek her.

"Oh, my dear mistress! for so sure I may now call you: what is the matter?—and why are you crying here your two *handfulls*, when your lover is as constant to you as ever a man that went the Dublin road!—where, sure he now is; and see what he has given me for yourself!"

"Oh! give it me, dear Judy!"

"Just a little bit of a note he wrote with his *pincil*, when I watched for him outside the gate; for, thinks I to myself, after that long *confab* with his *ould* reverence, he must have settled something about you, dear; and sure enough so he did."

"Do give me the note quickly;—what are you fumbling for?" said Louisa impatiently.

"I put it in my *thrash-bag;* but I can tell you every word in it. His honour himself *tould* it to me—and he would not have written only he thought it was a *tinder attintion*."

"Surely you have not lost it!" said Louisa.

"No, here it is! every thing precious I *puts* under my left arm, it lies so snug. It is unsealed, at which I *tould* him not to grieve, for that it was as good as Latin to me, never having been taught reading and *writen*. At which his honour laughed, and said, Brian was a good scholar, and would teach me." Thus Judy continued to chatter. Louisa did not listen to a word she said, as her attention was entirely engrossed by the note. It contained only a few lines, pencilled on the back of a letter, to tell her that Mr. Kelly prevented his calling on her; that, for her sake he was obedient to him. He requested she would take care of herself, and answer his letters; she might expect to receive another from him soon after his arrival in Dublin. He added in a postscript—"I "find, from Judy's confession, I need

" not write so guardedly, and may tell
" you my fears.—Mr. Kelly is, I sus-
" pect, strongly inclined to favour Vil-
" lars; but I depend on your acting with
" firmness. Remember your promise;
" and be not over persuaded to give me
" up, on the plea of not entering a family
" unwilling to receive you. Let us con-
" sider this opposition as a trial of your
" love for me; and if you eventually con-
" quer all difficulties for my sake, how
" very dear you will be to me !"

Louisa, happy at finding him so strongly attached to her, felt her spirits revive; not indeed that she had doubted him, but every fresh proof of his tenderness gave her infinite pleasure. She had no fears respecting Mr. Kelly, well assured her happiness was his first object; and that he would ask her to make no unnecessary sacrifice; none but what honour, delicacy, and conscience required.

CHAPTER III.

To ev'ry light report their ears they lend;
Watch every rumour, every tale attend.

TASSO.

ON the following morning, the Listowels received an invitation from Lady Rumbold to spend the next day at Rumbold Hall. She depended on the lovely Miss Listowel for the success of her petition; and concluded with hoping her dear friend, Lady Elizabeth, would pardon her having detained her guests for another day.

This last paragraph gave the Listowels great pleasure; as they were anxious to withdraw Mary from observation.

The invitation was refused on the plea of her illness; but they requested Lady Rumbold would return with her friends

the next day. One of her ladyship's lively disposition, would, they hoped, make the time pass less heavily, and render Mary's lowness of spirits less apparent: they anxiously hoped to conceal the cause, expecting, as she was now so much better, that when she saw the doctor, and heard the result of their consultation respecting Villars, her mind would be calmer.

Doctor Gorman did not arrive until late in the evening, by which time Mary was almost well. Her mind had been made perfectly easy by some hints her mother gave; her illness, therefore, left very slight traces on her countenance. He found her reclining on a couch: 'her drapery falling round her figure in folds, as light as if the zephyrs had flung it there.'

He thought her the loveliest little person he ever beheld, the most innocent, and the most attractive. It never occurred to him that her langour was affected for the purpose of

engaging his attention and exciting his pity, and thus leading him to influence her father, and represent how injurious contradiction was to one so delicately formed. Her plan succeeded; for, after inquiring into the nature of her complaint, he questioned her closely as to her manner of spending her time, and tried to lead the conversation to subjects that would force her to talk of her acquaintances. At length, he said, looking towards Louisa —"I appoint your sister head nurse; and pronounce, that, if she follow my directions in administering certain draughts, I shall have you well in a day or two."

Lady Elizabeth observed—"That although Miss Kelly was no relative, there was little doubt she would treat her with a sister's care and tenderness."

"Is it possible, madam!—Are not the young ladies sisters?"

"No, indeed, sir;" said she laughing. They were quitting the apartment, and met Listowel at the door.

"I am happy," he said, "to see you come from my daughter's room so smiling!—You do not, doctor, think her case very desperate?"

"No, indeed, my good sir; but I can scarcely be a judge until I have had some conversation respecting her. I have been told," he continued, "that she was the whole of yesterday afternoon in strong convulsions. Now, it is necessary for me to know whether they were brought on by the state of her nervous system: perhaps," he said, smiling, "made more irritable by some contradiction from papa or mamma; or, whether they proceeded from a delicate constitution, which perhaps, has been lately tried by late hours."

"There is no use, my love!" said Lady Elizabeth, looking at her husband, "in concealing the truth from doctors. We may as well tell him all, and that we believe Mary's illness proceeds from all these causes. I am sorry to say,

doctor, my child inherits my delicacy of frame; and her sensibility and feelings are so finely wrought, that, like me, she cannot bear the slightest contradiction. She has latterly kept late hours; and we have been, I am sorry to say, obliged to contradict her; although, I assure you it is not our general practice. I think I may safely aver, that we never, until yesterday, seriously opposed her in the smallest trifle;—but, now, I may as well acknowledge it to you, we are obliged to act the severe parents, and positively have refused our consent to what she has most set her heart on."

"A very unpleasant predicament!" replied the doctor.—"This is not a time, however, when her frame is so languid and her spirits low, to teach her firmness of mind, and resignation. But you, my dear sir, must be the best judge; I can only recommend you as far as possible to indulge her."

"That is our intention," returned

Listowel, "if it should be absolutely necessary; I therefore kept out of her way until you saw her: and now I rejoice I did not commit myself, since I find she is so much better. Your countenances," he added, looking at the doctor, "revived me;—no despondency, no long faces coming out of her room. I trust we shall soon have her as cheerful as ever!"

"Oh! those smiles were caused by a blunder of mine," replied Gorman. "I supposed your daughter's friend her sister, and addressed her as such. In my life I never saw a stronger likeness than she bears to all your family!"

On making this observation, he looked full in Listowel's face, to obtain his concurrence in opinion; when, to his amazement, Listowel coloured like scarlet. Lady Elizabeth he saw observed it, and glanced from one to the other. He was conscious that his annoyed looks made matters worse; yet

he could not recover his self possession, or look otherwise than as a person who has just blundered out a secret that might interrupt the happiness of others.

Lady Elizabeth, too much shocked to continue with the gentlemen, hastily passed on to her own room.

The doctor lamented secretly the lateness of the hour, which obliged him to remain there that night: he felt as if he could not take himself away too soon.

They were summoned to supper; Lady Elizabeth sent her apology. Listowel was obliged to sit down *tète-a-tète* with the doctor, and felt himself in a most awkward dilemma, misunderstood, and secretly condemned. He felt that it was impossible to clear himself without revealing the truth, to which he was more averse than ever; considering poor Mary sacrificed to her mother's folly, and that if Louisa was now placed under her guidance, she would be the next

victim. He was determined at all hazards to preserve his secret, and to trust his vindication to the known moral rectitude of his conduct, and to his irreproachable character. As to Lady Elizabeth, he hoped to pacify her when he should tell her, on his word, that Louisa was born in wedlock.

The doctor likewise had his reflections; neither ate; and after they had sat thus for about half an hour, absorbed in themselves, Mrs. Tippet came to the door, to say her lady was not well, and requested to see Mr. Listowel. He immediately obeyed her summons. The doctor did not retire to his apartment; as he thought it probable he might be called on to compose the irritable nerves of the mother as well as of the daughter.

CHAPTER IV.

"O Jealousy! each other passion's calm
To thee, thou conflagration of the soul!
Thou king of torments! thou grand counterpoise
For all the transports beauty can inspire!"

Lady Elizabeth was still in the prime of life, very handsome, and had such a juvenile air, that she might have passed for her daughter's elder sister. Flattery and adulation were received by her as homage due to her rank and beauty, and although received as a matter of course, yet gave her infinite pleasure. This was soon understood in the gay world. Mr. Listowel was often considerably annoyed by the consequences of this foible. However, his watchful care saved her from the artful and profligate; and she was always held up in society as

an exemplary wife and mother. Of this Listowel took advantage; and, as he knew how she courted public opinion, tried to impress on her mind, that her attachment to him and to her children, were virtues that rendered her peculiarly interesting. Mary now equally required his attention, which prevented his being so exclusively devoted to his wife; at this crisis a dangerous relaxation of his watchful cares; for now she received more openly than ever the attentions of young men; looking on them as her daughter's admirers, and judging she could not have too many in her train. Perhaps that may be one cause why this period of life, when the still blooming mother is presenting her daughters, or what is commonly called taking them out, should be esteemed one of the most dangerous to conjugal happiness.

Robert Belmont was among the most assiduous in endeavouring to pleaseLady Elizabeth, and was regarded both by her

and Listowel as an amiable youth;—one in whose advancement they were interested, independent of their friendship for his parents, who entirely owed their present consequence to the Listowel family. Mr. Belmont was, within the last year, indebted to Mr. Listowel for the valuable deanery of R——, in the county of Dublin. Lady Elizabeth had always been very attentive to the young people, and kindly assisted Mrs. Belmont in bringing forward her daughters; consequently the family were, from motives of gratitude and interest, strongly attached to their patron; all excepting Robert, the Dean's second son, who still felt the deepest resentment towards Listowel, for having two years before detected him at a gambling table, and exposed his folly to his father. This, in his mind, cancelled all former sense of obligation; although Listowel had, on first discovering him there, paid a large debt he had incurred, on Robert's giving his

word that he never would again indulge in so ruinous a propensity. Listowel was much shocked at his want of principle in again pursuing the same course. He therefore recommended his father to let him suffer from the difficulties he had plunged into, as the surest means of disgusting him with the pursuit. The Dean was very willing to follow his advice, and stopped his allowance for the payment of his debts. His punishment did not end here; Mrs. Belmont had him henceforth closely watched, and whenever he incurred her displeasure, would (to use her own expression) cast it up in his teeth; and threatened, if he did not take care, she would keep his nose to the grinding-stone! All these mortifications nourished the hatred, already rooted in his breast, against Listowel; who, on his part, had almost forgotten the circumstance; attributing his error to a want of firmness natural to youth, in not resisting the intreaties of his idle,

dissipated companions, whom the want of money then obliged him to give up. Listowel congratulated himself on having been the means of saving him; and to prevent his again falling into the same temptation, had him of all their parties, to which Lady Elizabeth made no objection; as he was such a useful person, so obliging, and had such an air of fashion, that she allowed him to escort her every where. This had long been his ambition; as he hoped, by gaining her affections, yet to be revenged on Listowel. With demoniac pleasure he flattered himself he had discovered a clue which would lead to her confidence, estrange her from her husband, and likewise give him the gratification of teasing and humbling one, whose only crime was refusing to listen to his impertinence, and turning with disgust from his flattery and affronting vows of love:—this was the poor Louisa!—He had early perceived her strong resemblance to Lis-

towel, and it had readily occurred to his mind that she was his illegitimate offspring. When he first formed the suspicion about three years before, he spoke of her in his presence; and watching his countenance with a scrutinizing eye, was convinced, from the anxiety and affected carelessness of his manner, that his conclusions were just, and that he had discovered a secret of which he might hereafter make his own use.—Already it had proved to him a powerful engine for mischief, as it enabled him, with the greatest appearance of simplicity, to keep Listowel in constant agitation, by leading him to suppose that Edward loved Louisa. His disturbed feelings he knew would excite Lady Elizabeth's curiosity; and he likewise knew it was a subject on which her husband could not bear to be questioned: and therefore she would be easily led to him (Robert Belmont) for an explanation.

He had hitherto in vain attempted to raise suspicions in her breast. She did not understand his dark insinuations, and passed them over, along with many other subjects of discourse, as incomprehensible. A doubt of her husband's fidelity never occurred to her. But now, on beholding the doctor's suspicious glance, and her husband so evidently confused;—*all* seemed to tell her too plainly that she was an injured woman; and that her blindness, and not her happiness, must cause her friends to wonder.

Every hint of Robert Belmont's she now thought fully explained. Now she understood why he so often gazed on her with pity, and why he admired her generosity in being so kind to Louisa.

She threw herself on her couch in an agony of tears.—What was she to do! on what was she to determine!—Her maid found her in this state of perplexity when she came to announce supper.

Tippet, alarmed at seeing her lady so ill, asked if she should call Mr. Listowel.

"On no account," said Lady Elizabeth; "I shall be well presently. Tell Williams that I will not appear at supper; then return to give me some drops in water."

Tippet obeyed.

Her ladyship having taken the drops, became more composed; when Tippet thought proper to exert her eloquence, and with the usual loquacity of an Abigail, began—

"Oh, my lady! you take on too much! Miss Listowel will soon be well, and that sweet young lady wont quit her night or day, and has a bed—"

"What do you tell me? I do not want her care; my daughter will do very well without her! She shall not have her bed in the room!"

"I am sure, my lady, if you do not wish it, why should she?—But I thought *as how* she was liked by you

all, and was to be a kind of *proutjay* of the family!"

"Good heavens! Is my shame then known, and are my very servants in the secret?"

She now sobbed violently, and enraged at Tippet's endeavours to appease her, stamped angrily on the ground, desired her instantly to quit the room, and to send her Mr. Listowel. The maid hastened to obey.

Lady Elizabeth now considered concealment of her wrongs no longer possible, and gave herself up to all the horrors of jealousy.

Listowel (as has been already mentioned) hastened to her assistance, very much surprised at finding her so ill, which he justly attributed to her doubt of him: but to find her actuated by more than a slight suspicion, shocked and embarrassed him.

On his appearance she overwhelmed him with reproaches; insisting on his sending that moment the offspring of

his crime, and the proof of his guilt, out of the house; as she would not allow such to have communication with her innocent daughter.

In vain Listowel tried to pacify her; the gentleness with which he bore her bitter reproaches, increased her rage, which she was convinced he would not undeservedly submit to so patiently. She now stamped violently, and desired him instantly on his peril to take away the odious creature. In vain he remonstrated—she tried to push him out of the room—Listowel was at length provoked, and her passion had not so blinded her, but that she could distinguish he was in a mood no longer to be trifled with; she therefore dextrously insinuated, that in compassion to her weak nerves, he should not entertain a guest so obnoxious to her; and that surely as a proof of his fidelity towards her, and his carelessness about the girl, he might then send her out of the house.

"On what pretence should we act

in so very extraordinary a manner?" said Listowel.

"That I will no longer allow her to associate with Miss Listowel," returned her ladyship.

"For what reason?" asked her husband.

"What dreadful assurance!" exclaimed Lady Elizabeth. Do you wish me to say what and who I believe her to be?"

"You are very welcome," returned Listowel. "Pray, my love! be calm; believe me, when I tell you on the word of a gentleman, that I know her parents; and——"

"What consummate impudence!" interrupted her ladyship. "I do not, I assure you, Mr. Listowel, doubt your knowledge of her parents!"

"From circumstances," replied her husband, "that I cannot at present mention to you, her father was obliged to place her under Mr. Kelly's care.—

She was born in wedlock, and her parents are people of the highest respectability."

"I do not care;—turn her out!" said her ladyship, haughtily.

"Mr. Kelly shall take her away in the morning," said her husband.

"No,—she must turn out this moment!" returned her angry ladyship; "or I will not go to bed, but will sit up all night!"

"You are likely to do so," replied Mr. Listowel, mildly, "if taking your rest depend on our being guilty of a breach of hospitality: I will suffer no young lady to be treated cruelly while under our protection. To-morrow she shall go!"

Too much exhausted to urge further, Lady Elizabeth was now obliged to give up the point, determining she would the next morning be on the watch for Mr. Kelly; and inquired what hour it was probable he would call. "Do

not," said she, "for a moment suppose I will allow that creature to appear at my breakfast-table."

He mentioned ten o'clock as the probable hour, secretly resolving to have her out of the house long before.

He left her, at length, somewhat composed, and returned to the parlour to tell the doctor how his wife was; he found Edward there, who looked pale and shocked. He asked no questions, but waiting until the doctor's inquiries were answered, left the room. The doctor likewise looked grave, and poor Listowel felt as if all the world condemned him. As he was retiring to his bed-room, he met Louisa on the stairs, with a candle in her hand, looking beautiful, and unconscious of the unhappiness her presence caused. She was going towards Lady Elizabeth's room; he was just in time to stop her.

"Oh, Mr. Listowel! I am glad to meet you! can you tell me how Lady

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Elizabeth is? Miss Listowel heard she was ill, and could not compose herself to rest until I myself should inquire for her."

"It is most fortunate I have met you," said her father; "as she has desired not to be disturbed: tell this to my daughter, and that we hope to-morrow she will be quite well. Say likewise to Mary, if she does not come down I will go see her."

"I am happy to hear it," replied Louisa. "Miss Listowel is very uneasy at your not paying her the visit you promised; she fears you are displeased with her."

"Tell her," replied Listowel, "circumstances prevent my seeing her until to-morrow, but that I have her happiness very much at heart. Was Mr. Kelly here this evening?"

"Yes," said Louisa, blushing at the recollection of their conference. "He came to me for about half an hour."

"When do you expect him again?" inquired her father.

"I do not know; he did not mention any time."

It occurred to Listowel that he might walk with her in the morning to the Glebe, which perhaps might save them all a trying scene; for he suspected his wife would be on the watch for the arrival of Mr. Kelly: he therefore asked her if she ever took a walk before breakfast.

"Yes, frequently."

"Will you come with me to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, to the Glebe?"

"With pleasure!"

He then bid her good night, and went to his room.

CHAPTER V.

" In vain from side to side he throws
His form in courtship of repose;
Or if he doz'd, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart."

LISTOWEL passed a miserable night: awake, and restless, he lay counting the clock, distracted to think how he should get through the day, pacify Lady Elizabeth, and clear his character from this foul aspersion, without sacrificing his darling Louisa.

At the appointed hour he tapped at his daughter's door; Louisa was nearly ready, and promised to follow him down stairs in a moment. She would not go without first looking at her young friend, who was still asleep. She bent

over her, admiring the innocent sweetness of her countenance; a playful smile dimpled her cheek, which she kissed, and praying heaven to bless her, quitted the room softly, and found Listowel on the steps of the hall door.

He complimented her on being an early riser, saying, he supposed the Kellys kept early hours.

She said—"They were remarkably tenacious of their time, and that they calculated for one year they devoted to sleep, they should be three awake."

"That is a nice calculation," observed Listowel; "and if carried further we should find many years of our lives wasted in trifles."

"So my father says.—He has drawn a scale of time for me, hoping to make me ashamed of idleness.—He had the idea from a work on Practical Education. It was ridiculous, or rather melancholy, to see in the scale he drew for me, how large a portion of my life

was wasted, went in idling or unnecessary actions; he allowed years for seeking for what was mislaid, caused by forgetfulness, or want of method. I see you laugh; you will, perhaps, from this account think me uncommonly careless.—I had better not let you see the scale he has drawn for me."

"You may," returned Listowel. "I believe you throw away less time than most girls of your age; for which, allow me to say, you are indebted to Mr. Kelly's excellent management. Naturally your disposition is as playful and as wild as Mary's: you should, therefore, my dear child! consider yourself under some obligation to the parent that placed you so judiciously."

Poor Louisa coloured, and looked dreadfully shocked. She feared he was about to reveal to her that he was her father—that she should no longer have a doubt on the subject—yet she dreaded, as much as she wished for, this com-

munication. She felt her parents must be dear to her; perhaps she should now hear who her mother was. 'But, alas!' thought she, 'her conduct may still be such as to cover me with shame!'

Listowel could not account for her distressed looks, unless that Lady Elizabeth's suspicion was now become the general one, and had reached her. He could not bear to stand so low in her esteem, or that she should conquer, through her regard for him, the repugnance a delicate mind always feels to vice.

"You look grave, my love!" said he, taking her hand, "and no longer inquire about your parents? Do you condemn them because concealed from your view? Would not a dutiful child be inclined to think more favourably of them, and to suppose their concealment proceeded from misfortune?"

"You know me very little if you suppose me indifferent," returned Louisa.

"They, indeed, occupy my thoughts too much. I envy the poorest peasant's child that is fostered by a father and mother, that is an acknowledged, a connected being with society. As for me——"

She stopped, fearing she had said too much;—that her words conveyed reproach, and would have given the world to recal them. She wished to look up, to see if he were depressed, if he were hurt, but found it impossible, until she heard him sigh heavily, which adding keenness to her self reproaches, she raised her tearful eyes.—"Will you," said she, "forgive me? I have indeed been very impatient—perhaps you will say petulant! I should wait in humble duty their own time for acknowledging me; and, as you justly observe, be grateful to them for placing me under the Kellys' care.—I will never repine again!"

He pressed her hand to his lips:—

"You are a good girl! and I lament that it is not in my power to make you happy by telling you the whole truth. I find there is a report going, springing from your strong resemblance to Mary, which I fancy you have heard."

She trembled so much that she was obliged to lean for support against the tree that obstructed their path.

"Rest yourself, my sweet girl! your agitation tells me my conjecture is right, and I cannot endure to have your young mind made so unhappy. I will therefore impart to you, that your father was married to your mother on the same day that I was united to Lady Elizabeth. You were the second pledge of their love,—born in about two years after their marriage."

"Heaven bless you!" said Louisa, looking up at him, with the most beautiful expression of delight and gratitude beaming on her countenance. "You would not surely deceive me—I can-

not doubt you—I am so happy; may I not tell this to"—? She stopped, and blushed.

He laughed.—"I will say it for you—to Talbot. It is difficult, my dear child! to refuse you; I would not, but that I am afraid of your being made too much the subject of conversation. I will therefore give you a discretionary power, and if you find it at all necessary to your happiness, you may tell him. Now, my dearest child!—nay, do not start! such I must always call you—Mary herself, is not dearer to me than you are. But, as I was going to observe, I hope and expect what I have just told you will keep up your spirits, and enable you to bear the shock I must now give your feelings. Lady Elizabeth has, through the interference of some busy person, conceived the same idea that you have had—she will not believe me to the contrary. Therefore, notwithstanding, the affection she bears you, I think you

had better remain to-day at the Glebe; or, until this matter is cleared up."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed his daughter.—"Then she banishes me her presence; I am an object of abhorrence, I suppose."

Poor Louisa was very much shocked, and endeavoured to conceal her emotion, from respect to Listowel's feelings; who, she knew, must feel deeply this imputatation cast on his character. After a long pause she said, mournfully—"I am sorry I did not know this sooner; I fear I shall never see Miss Listowel again."

"I will bring her to see you," said her father, with tenderness of manner, "as soon as Lady Elizabeth's mind is at rest, and will tell Mary your anxiety."

They now proceeded, and were not sorry to see Mr. Kelly coming to meet them. Louisa could no longer converse, fearing her interrupted utterance would betray how deeply she was affected. It would have wounded her feelings to have

been an object of aversion to any one; and most particularly distressing, when she was become so to one whom she admired, and looked up to with gratitude and affection for the kindness and partiality she had treated her with: and now to turn her out of the house, without even seeing her, she thought was cruel, and wounding to her pride, and that surely her ladyship was to be condemned for treating with such unnecessary severity, one who never injured her. She looked towards her now beloved Glebe, and thought herself but too happy to be once more beneath the peaceful roof with such worthy people, who loved her so tenderly, that no idle story or narrow prejudice could close their hearts against her.

Mr. Kelly was rejoiced to see her. "You are come, my little run-away, to show yourself to my wife in these fine clothes!"

He soon perceived from her heavy

eyes and averted face that something had distressed her—and let her pass.

The good Mrs. Kelly met her at the door, and folding her in her arms, welcomed her home.

"My beloved child! the time has passed heavily since we parted. How can I ever do without you! Let me look at you; they tell me you are more beautiful than ever in these fine clothes. The folks do nothing but rave of you!" Mrs. Kelly now first perceived her tears, which were chasing each other in quick succession down her pale cheeks.

"What is the matter, my love? Let me look at you!" she said.

"Oh, no, no, my dear mother!" said Louisa, hiding her face in her bosom: "do not look at me, or these odious clothes; they have only brought me mortification and ill-treatment. Mr. Listowel is coming, let me run away; I will put on my own clothes, and be ready to make breakfast for you in a moment."

Mrs. Kelly was obliged to remain and receive Mr. Listowel, but her heart was with her child: she wondered who could have thus raised her spirit, knowing the gentleness of her temper, her patience, and that she was devoid of all vehemence in expressing her feelings. Mrs. Kelly could not but suppose she was deeply injured, and consequently felt strong resentment towards Mr. Listowel, as it was partly in his care she had placed her darling.

Louisa did not give herself time for a moment's reflection, but quickly putting on her humble garb, and bathing her eyes, that Mr. Listowel might see no traces of her grief, she hastened to the parlour, and made preparations for breakfast.

Listowel gazed on her with silent admiration; he was sensible of the struggle she must have had in recovering her composure, and conquering the resentment he saw she felt at being invited,

and then dismissed for no cause, without being even allowed to take leave of her friend. Yet, now she was looking so calm, with such good sense attending to others, and not engrossed by self. How different, thought he, would Mary have acted, we should have had her in fits.

His approving looks encouraged Louisa. With less effort she preserved her cheerfulness; which evidently, at least to the good old couple, was not the natural result of the heart, but proceeded entirely from an effort to banish melancholy ideas.

When breakfast was over, Mr. Listowel asked to see the farm, and Mr. Kelly's improvements, for the purpose of having some conversation with him.

He informed him of the error Lady Elizabeth had fallen into, and of the aversion she had taken to poor Louisa; then lamented to him the trouble he should have in persuading her, that Louisa was the legitimate daughter of

respectable parents. He dwelt as little as possible on the subject, as he feared his simple questions and his penetrating eye.

Listowel next mentioned Talbot's attachment to Louisa, and said it would be a most desirable match.

Mr. Kelly begged leave to differ with him in opinion; saying, his girl would never be happy in a family that would treat her as their inferior, and as an obtruder; that she had too much dignity of mind, he would not call it pride, to feel happy in such a situation.

Mr. Listowel observed, there was a great deal of truth in what he said, as far as it related in general to unequal matches; but for the one at present under their contemplation, he could guarantee Louisa's never being exposed to such mortifications.

Mr. Kelly smiled in a doubting manner, and waved the subject: he then mentioned Mr. Villars' proposal, which

he said met with his entire approbation.

Listowel almost looked furious at such a declaration, and swore, under his breath, he should never have her; but quickly recovering his composure, he said, mildly, that would not answer; and explained to him how Villars was situated with regard to his family, and that he supposed, poor Mary, so unused to contradiction, must now be indulged. This of course silenced Mr. Kelly, and after some observations on the farm, Listowel took his leave.

CHAPTER VI.

" By plausive speech and eloquence of words
His subtle genius every taste could meet;
In fiction prompt, and skilful in deceit:
Master of calumny such various ways,
He most accuses when he seems to praise."

LISTOWEL heard on his return that Lady Elizabeth had been inquiring for him. Like a culprit he hastened to her boudoir, dreading her rage would know no bounds on finding he had accompanied Louisa home. He was therefore pleased to see her anger had subsided; that she was now only sullen, and that she condescended, in mild terms, to reproach him for attending Louisa; complaining that it was evident he dreaded her seeing Mr. Kelly until he had first taught him his lesson; adding, it was a useless pre-

caution, as she was resolved this secret should not escape her scrutiny.

He replied, she was at liberty to act as she pleased: and that if she chose to indulge her high strained feelings in a fancied woe, she would have herself to reproach; for he conceived, even if appearances were against him, that his word, solemnly given, backed by his known irreproachable life, should argue strongly in his favour, and set her jealous fears at rest.

Lady Elizabeth, although provoked at his coolness, yet began to think she was unjust in her suspicions; and that, if not an innocent man, he must be a finished hypocrite, which her long experience of his candour and truth forbade her to think. Whilst this was agitating in her mind, she vouchsafed to answer his inquiries about her daughter; informing him she had passed a good night, and was almost well. "But," added she, "her recovery is the consequence of the hopes I gave her."

"In a little time," replied this careful father, "we may judge how far it is necessary to comply with her wishes. I think, after two years, we may, if she continue to wish it, give our consent."

Lady Elizabeth approved of this plan, as it would for the present satisfy her daughter, and give her hopes of still seeing realized the airy castles she had formed for her grandeur.

She then went to Mary, whose first address was—

"Is Miss Kelly yet returned?"

Her mother had the prudence not to make her daughter the confidant of her suspicions; she therefore replied, that her return was improbable, and that she could not at present account for her absence. To raise her spirits, she told her to hope every thing from her father's tender affection, and anxiety for her happiness.

Lady Elizabeth's mind became calmer. On reflection she acquitted Listowel, and therefore felt sufficiently disengaged

to study what part she should act, having every reason to dread their fracas would not long remain a secret. Should she be the jealous miserable?—Or, perhaps, the injured innocent wife, doubting, yet fondly devoted to her husband, was the more interesting character. It was impossible at once to decide on this difficult point; for the present she would adopt the injured innocent; as that character would be easier laid aside than the jealous miserable. She expected the whole party to return that day; and hoped, at least for the present, to conceal what had happened. She mostly feared Robert Belmont, and dreaded his scrutinizing eye.

The doctor took his leave, and said, with a little care and attention Miss Listowel would be perfectly well.

Mary was not quite pleased at their deferring her marriage with Villars to such a distant period as two years. However, she was obliged to abide by

their decree; secretly hoping, since they had yielded so far to her wishes, that they would, on Villars' application, shorten the term.

Listowel, by letter, informed him of the happiness that awaited him; and apologized for having so long withheld his consent; invited him to occupy his former apartment in their house in Dublin; and that he hoped, on his return there, he would place entire confidence in him. In the commencement of his letter he explained the conditions on which they gave their consent. It was couched in such terms as must, if Villars had a thought of entering the family, have caused him the severest mortification; every sentence cold and condescending, so unlike his usual style.

At six o'clock Lady Rumbold and her friends returned from Killarney.

Robert Belmont was curious to learn the events that had taken place in his absence, from Mrs. Tippet, who had

great satisfaction in giving him a minute account of all that happened, and of all that was supposed to have happened. —How, it was said, Miss Louisa was turned out of the house by my lady in the night! But that, indeed, was their lies; for Mr. Listowel, early in the morning, brought her home himself, where she was to remain, until her mother, a lady of undoubted fashion, came to claim her. For, that Miss Louisa had as good blood in her veins as ever a woman in the kingdom; if, *but as how* the parson had said a few words. Then there was poor Miss Mary! poor innocent soul!—had not a suspicion of a word of all this: she, poor thing, is breaking her heart for love of Mr. Villars; who, we believe, is as hard-hearted a gentleman as ever *comed* from England—so we all said in the steward's room; and that he did not care a button for Miss Mary. But, indeed, they who know him longest, say he was not a man for the ladies; as

he had never a word of flirtish conversation. If he cared a straw for any of them, it was for Miss Louisa, as she was quiet, and understood all the Latin books.

Robert listened with the profoundest attention to this long rigmarole, and easily separating truth from falsehood, was determined matters should not end so quietly as the parties seemed inclined.

He regretted Louisa's departure, thinking her the most lovely girl he had ever seen; worthy even, had she a fortune, of being Mrs. Robert Belmont. But, poor and unknown as she was, he considered his slightest notice an honour; and was outrageous at her refusing to listen to his protestations of love; apologizing for treating her with neglect in company, lest his father and mother should discover the state of his heart; how he adored her; and declared he was miserably jealous, and ready to shoot

any man that paid her attention. Thus he would torment and frighten her by his vehemence, whilst he became every day more out of patience on finding there was no chance of gaining her favour. On the contrary, her dislike seemed to increase. He was musing on her ingratitude, as he called it, whilst he was dressing, and was resolved it should not go unpunished. Next to Louisa, he admired Lady Elizabeth; besides, being seen in her train, would raise him in the fashionable world: and if their intimacy caused Listowel uneasiness, he would think himself in some measure revenged.

At length, when the mighty task of dressing was over, Belmont sauntered into the drawing-room, hoping to find Lady Elizabeth there, that they might have some conversation before the crowd assembled. His wish was granted; he found her reclining on a *chaise-longue*, at the upper end of the room. Her confusion at his appearance was very evident, and he soon discovered that she

dreaded his penetration. He accosted her with an air of softness, tinctured with pity, and expressed his concern at hearing of her indisposition.

"I have not been well; but," her ladyship said, with an inquiring look, "I did not think you could have heard of my being otherwise."

"That," replied he, "is supposing great indifference on my part. Where the object is very interesting, we can seldom remain in ignorance of her smallest emotion: at least it is generally the case with those of my ardent temper. You have sent home Louisa!" A smile played about his mouth, and a look of triumph that seemed to say—*'You see you have no secrets from me!'*

She coloured like scarlet; was really distressed, and at a loss how to preserve her secret. Too correct a woman to choose a male confidant; and yet, of a weak mind, which looked to others for support.

After a long pause, she replied—"I

kept Louisa longer than I intended, on account of Mary's illness. Mary is now quite well. I had no pretence for keeping her longer, as she wished to return to her friends."

"I rejoice that you indulged her!—Remember, I tell you that you have nourished a viper that will sting you!—My acquaintance with her is of long standing."

"You shock me very much!—Surely you cannot mean what you say?—Poor Louisa is certainly unoffending!—But, I see;" replied she, smiling, "you do not choose, for want of a strong expression, to let your conversation grow vapid."

"I mean what I say!—Am I wrong," said he, with a beseeching look, "in thus committing myself?—you may repeat my words to Mr. Listowel. I am aware of all this, and yet so alive am I to every thing that concerns you, that, for the soul of me, I cannot refrain from speaking!"

"Depend on it you are misinformed! or have, with the hastiness of youth, taken up some trifle, 'light as air;' which has appeared to my zealous friend," she said, playfully tapping him with her fan, 'as confirmation strong!'—The girl is certainly beautiful: but seriously, my dear Belmont, she appears too gentle and too innocent ever to have the properties of a viper.—I must insist," added she, looking earnestly in his face, "on your either retracting or explaining that harsh expression!"

"I will do which you please," replied Belmont; "your commands are laws to me. But with this one proviso—if I explain, it is only to yourself—my words are never to go further."

"You frighten me! I hate mystery!" said Lady Elizabeth, becoming still paler; "and never had a secret in my life. I tell every thing to Listowel; it is a habit which I cannot conquer."

"You had better then make no in-

quiry," said the young man: "let us drop the subject.—It banishes those playful smiles I so much admire."

"Why do you talk so much nonsense! If your mysteriousness did not catch my attention, I should hand you over to the younger part of my company, as more suited to you," said her ladyship, looking much distressed.

"That indeed would be a punishment: I must endeavour to mitigate your wrath, lest you should inflict it."

CHAPTER VII.

Thou shalt be great—shall be Mendizabel's bride !

MATURIN.

THE company now assembled: Lady Rumbold, as usual, richly dressed, and looking very handsome, at least in the eyes of the Earl of Ardsallagh, who had that morning joined their party. When Mary came in, he looked at her rather severely, and in an audible voice informed his brother, who was at the other end of the room, that he had that morning met Stockdale on his way to Dublin.

Listowel regretted his absence, and spoke highly in his praise.

Mary coloured, disliking Stockdale more than ever, for being the cause of her uncle's angry glance.

Lady Rumbold looked surprised, and smiling, whispered softly—"I did not think, Lord Ardsallagh, that handsome face could express so much indignation; pouting, or anger, I should have thought more in character."

Ardsallagh coloured, and again resumed the expression of countenance that had diverted her.

"Your ladyship treats me as a spoiled baby!" Quickly recovering himself, he smiled, and acknowledged he was wrong.

"What has poor niece done?" said the lively Countess.—"Come—that look, and my own observation tells me all.—She was cruel to Stockdale, and he is gone—not to take the lover's leap—but to drown care in the dissipation of Dublin."

"He is a worthy fellow! I should be proud to give him my niece," replied his lordship.

"Say but a word—I am his confidant; allow me to give him the smallest

hope, and he shall be her dangler a little longer," said Lady Rumbold.

"Without being authorised, how can I?" said the peer. Yet I should hope his perseverance, and the interference of her friends, might eventually gain her for him: she has an affectionate heart, and I should hope, with one of his steady, manly character, her happiness would be secured."

"May she not hereafter reproach you all," said the widow, with an arch smile, and an air of affected gravity, "for forging her chains—and perhaps in some years run off with a man of her her own choosing?"

Ardsallagh, reddening with indignation, was going to exclaim; but Lady Rumbold stopped him, by laying her fan on his lips.

"Silence!" said she, laughing; "that look speaks volumes; I do not intend to impeach the honour of your house; the idea was only a flight of fancy,

uttered merely to discover if you would direct at me one of those awful glances. —Let us make peace: here is my hand!"

Ardsallagh took it, and pressing it to his lips, said, smiling—"This quarrel, I am sure was caused to bring this beautiful hand and arm into notice, which for symmetry and colour, can only be compared to—"

"Hush! do not mind it now!" said her ladyship, with affected alarm; "write a sonnet on it another time.—Mrs. Belmont watches us; she thinks I take up too much of your time from her beloved *Car*.—Your attentions yesterday raised the poor mother's hopes."

"Yes, I waltzed with her last night," returned the earl: "but why?—you refused me—and Mrs. Belmont gave me no peace until I took her out."

"I never waltz," said Lady Rumbold, glancing at her large figure. "In me it would look ridiculous. I left you for a younger partner."

Mrs. Belmont now sidled over. "My lord," inquired she, "do you not think my *Car.* looks very pale?—Yet no, I do not think she suffered from dancing last night."

"I think she looks very lovely! as she always does," said his lordship.

"Have you seen her paintings? She draws admirably, to the life! Upon my credit she takes mighty pretty likenesses!" said Mrs. Belmont.

"What an enviable talent!" exclaimed Lady Rumbold.

"Does your ladyship indeed think so?" returned the vain mother, exultingly. "My poor child is very happy in her resemblances. You can judge yourself when you come to Sea View; she has all our family in one large piece, in which I made her leave picture-frames, mighty convenient you will allow, to place any additions my sons or daughters give the family. Now, as *a body may say*, you are one of *us*—

(the peer glanced archly at Lady Rumbold)—we might place your ladyship in one of these picture-frames:—but, dear! that would not be lucky; it would be for all the world like condemning one of my sons or daughters to celibacy, should your ladyship take up the space to be occupied by their husband or wife—unless you marry one of the lads, and then you will have a right!"

Lady Rumbold laughed.

"But without her ladyship aspiring so high, could not Miss Belmont make a separate picture of her?" asked Lord Ardsallagh.

"The child has no canvass prepared; besides, it would look remarkably comfortable and domestic to have us all, man and boy, in one piece," returned Mrs. Belmont.

The servant now announced dinner. Listowel had not yet recovered his spirits, and found no resource, excepting the good things on the table, for en-

tertaining his guests. Every one felt distressed; the reports they had heard that morning of Mary's silly conduct, and of the suspicions against him, lowered their spirits. Dulness seemed to pervade every one, excepting Lord Ardsallagh and Lady Rumbold, Lady Elizabeth and Robert Belmont, who never had been so open in his homage. Her ladyship smiled most graciously, and appeared to give him every encouragement, not with any view of adopting a flirting manner, but merely as she was in the habit of receiving great attention from Listowel, who, doubtful how his services would be received, left her entirely to the care of Robert. As to Lady Rumbold, she was charmed with the earl, thinking him the most delightful man she had ever met, whilst, the secretly entertaining a hope that his admiration of her would not end here, made her more sensible of his powers of pleasing.

Sir Offingdon Wilmot lamented being obliged to return the next day to Sea View, and to take his family from a place where they experienced so much happiness, and were so indebted to the kind hospitality of Mr. and Lady Elizabeth Listowel: his speech was neat, appropriate, and highly complimentary; he then sought in his wife's eyes the applause he felt he so highly merited; they were turned on him with an expression he could not define; he therefore considered it better to follow her lead, requesting the whole party to visit Sea View on their way to Dublin.

It was at length finally arranged, that Lady Rumbold and Mrs. Stockdale should remain one day after the Wilmots, &c., and then follow them to Sea View, with Lord Ardsallagh and Robert Belmont. The Listowels could only call there for about an hour, as they were impatient to return to Dublin.

Mrs. Stockdale lamented the downfal

of her hopes concerning Mary; who, she now considered as so degraded by her attachment to Villars, that she ceased to regard her alliance as desirable; and rejoiced at her son's escape from a forward girl, spoiled by early indulgence.

The next morning, after the departure of Mrs. Belmont and her daughters, Lady Elizabeth took the ladies in her barouche, to see a beautiful place in the neighbourhood. Mary accompanied them on horseback, attended by her father and Robert Belmont. She complained of the heat, and requested her father would return with her, and that Mr. Belmont would be so good as to ride on, and inform her mother of their having gone home.

As soon as Mary was alone with her father, she acknowledged her motive in complaining of heat was merely for an apology to get rid of Robert Belmont; and—"Hoping, dear papa," said she,

looking beseechingly, "to induce you to take me to visit poor Louisa. I do not know why, but mamma no longer likes her.—I am sure she is very amiable, and loves me; I know she does: for before she went away the other morning, she took a most affectionate leave of me. She thought I was asleep; but I, thinking I should so soon see her again, was too lazy to speak: I have thought of her ever since—I shall not be happy until you bring me to take leave of her."

Listowel smiled.—"How ardent my dear Mary is!—every wish of yours is connected with your happiness;—but I see no harm at present in indulging you."

They found Louisa looking pale and ill; her countenance brightened on seeing them. Mary threw her arms round her neck, and tenderly embraced her. Louisa, quite overcome, burst into tears —vainly endeavouring to conquer her emotion. Mrs. Kelly kindly apolo-

gized for her weakness, by saying she had been ill, and that the poor child was in great grief, having heard they had all left the country, and she feared she should never see Miss Listowel again.

Poor Listowel's heart smote him. 'Can I be justified?' thought he, 'in causing my family so much affliction? However, this secresy must soon terminate: if I now give up my poor girl, just arrived at the age when whim and fancy reign triumphant, I should lose the advantage of years of trial."

Mary and Louisa promised to write to each other constantly. At length, Listowel impatient to be at home before Lady Elizabeth's return, hurried Mary away, who took a tender leave of her friend, giving her, as a token of her love, her hair set in a very handsome locket.

They were not long gone, when Edward came to take leave of Louisa.

He spoke of Talbot, whom he praised warmly, as a person every way calculated to make her happy. He was out of all patience with the curate, for wishing her to give him up in favour of Villars, acknowledging that he had undertaken to plead his cause; and declared no circumstance that could occur, would make him feel so happy as their union. He promised to write to her, and would not give up the idea of Louisa being his sister.

Louisa felt very low at his departure; she feared she should never see the Listowels again. Now that their curiosity respecting Killarney was satisfied, it was probable they never would a second time succeed in conquering Lady Elizabeth's repugnance to visiting so far from the capital.

She rose earlier than usual the next morning, in order (from a height in the garden) to see them depart.

CHAPTER VIII.

Dead now is happiness—'tis past, 'tis o'er—
And in its place, the thousand thoughts of yore
Which haunt my melancholy bosom; seen
Like the faint memory of a pleasing dream—
They charm a moment—and they are no more!

CAMOENS.

KOTZEBUE asks, "Why are the joys of this world like the rays of the moon in a wild tempestuous night, when her silver orb is eclipsed every moment by fleeting clouds, like the sleep of a sick person, who, after a few minutes of rest, awakes to be tormented by new agonies?" Such were Villars' feelings during his melancholy journey; now, for the second time, a solitary wanderer, and again obliged to forsake those objects, without whom life appeared a

dreary desert. Who should again fill up the vacuum in his heart: or, was he for ever doomed to remain uncheered by friendship; and with a mind capable of the strongest attachment, to live unloved and forgotten. He was absorbed in this melancholy train of thought, when the mail entering Dublin, set him down at the Hibernian hotel.

Here he intended to await the answers to his letters from Listowel Park.

He was seated at a solitary dinner; the memory of former times embittered his sufferings; and occurred to him as fresh as if years had not elapsed since he left England; when his attention was drawn to the window by a carriage stopping at the door, and causing an unusual bustle among the waiters. It was laden with packages, and seemed but just landed from the packet. Presently he saw Lord Ellismore alight, and hand out two ladies, whose faces were shaded by large bonnets, which,

together with the dusk of the evening, entirely concealed them from his observation. When ascending the stairs, one of the ladies spoke to the waiter: her voice was familiar to him, and thrilled through his whole frame. 'Is it possible!' thought he. 'Can Mrs. Dunstanville be in Ireland; yet I cannot be mistaken in that voice!' He listened in breathless attention—the words were repeated, and presently she was answered, not by the waiter, but by a voice so soft, so sweet, that he could no longer doubt that the being he most dreaded, and most wished to behold, was now in the same house with him. He stood like one transfixed. The door of his apartment was not closed, which afforded him a view of a female, busily employed in examining small parcels, writing cases, work boxes, &c. that were laid close to his door.

He was all attention, and overheard the footman who came to her assistance,

say—"I am afraid this weary box will never be found, it has been forgot."

"Not it, truly; is it my mistress's jewel box?—no, no, we have too sharp an eye after it. But can't you go for a candle, and not have us poking here in the dark?"

The servant obeyed, as one of the ladies came to assist; who said she knew exactly where the box was. She spoke very low: still Villars thought he could not be mistaken in her voice, and that she must be his beloved Eleanor.

The waiter returned with the candle. The lady had thrown back her bonnet—was stooping down seeking the box, so that Villars could not see her face:—the light fell on her fair luxuriant hair! Presently she found what she sought, and raising her head with a smile of triumph, handed the box to her maid, as she hastily withdrew. The maid was following, when her attention was drawn to the parlour, by a noise as if some person

fell. The waiter opened the door, and found poor Villars lying senseless on the ground. The female assisted in placing him on a sofa, and in using such remedies as they deemed most efficacious. At length their efforts were rewarded; he opened his eyes, and sighing deeply, looked earnestly at the young woman. Her inquiries instantly restored his self-possession; and politely thanking her for her attention, begged to know to whom he was so much obliged."

"I *waits* on Mrs. and Miss Dunstanville," replied the young woman.

"Miss Dunstanville!" reiterated Villars. "Then she is not married?"

"No," returned the maid; "not yet!"

"Is Mr. Ramsey in Ireland?"

"Oh dear, no, sir! Poor gentleman! there was an end to him long ago. The match between him and my young mistress was broke off just as my mother left her, and as she took me into her service."

"Your mother's name was Bolton?"

"Yes, sure! Do you know her?" She did not wait to hear his answer, as she was then called, for the third time; and quitted the room, leaving Villars in a state of the greatest anxiety. To hear Eleanor was unmarried, and still at liberty, almost exceeded his belief. 'But why was she in Ireland?—had she long left the Continent?' were questions he would give the world to have answered. It was agony to him to continue in his present state of uncertainty. He felt more than ever the wretchedness, the desolateness of his situation; and what increased the bitterness of his sufferings was, the reflection that in leaving his family, he gave up every prospect of fortune; and could not now, on the scanty pittance realized by his services to the Listowels, even if she were free as air, presume to renew his addresses. But, could he say he was himself disengaged:—the thought was

dreadful!—Perhaps at this very moment the die was cast which must decide his fate!—Now that he had again seen Eleanor, he was surprised that any circumstance could have induced him to think of uniting himself with another.

He awaited in torturing suspense the arrival of the next post, which he apprehended might seal his misery; condering it not probable that Louisa's friends would allow her to refuse so eligible an alliance; and that, dependant and inexperienced as she was, to obtain a name and place in society would be most desirable. Thus his happiness might be for ever blasted, and hers not assured. Much felicity could not spring from such a heartless union: but to woo, and then desert an innocent and helpless female was not in his nature; he was resolved to abide by her answer. Tortured by these reflections, he went to bed, hoping in dull forgetfulness to cheat misery of a few hours.

After a night of restless slumbering he arose unrefreshed; his pulse was high and feverish; yet he was impatient to descend to the parlour, that he might from thence watch the motions of his much loved Eleanor, and perhaps again see her.

At eleven o'clock, Lord Ellismore's servant came, with his lord's compliments, to inquire for Mr. Villars, and to request the pleasure of his company to breakfast.

Villars started on hearing this message. 'Was it possible!' thought he. 'Could he, indeed, be invited to the table where Eleanor made one of the company!'—For a moment he hesitated as to what reply he should make; and was almost inclined to venture, thinking she would never discover in him her once much loved cousin; sensible that grief had left deeper traces on his countenance than time could have effected in the years that had elapsed since they

parted. He felt likewise he had no longer the lightness of youth, either in figure or address: but then his voice—he had known her instantly by her voice, and she would as surely recognise his: besides, he did not feel himself possessed of the firmness necessary to appear as a stranger in her presence. He wondered he could have paused a moment, and hastily replied to his lordship's polite inquiries; saying, that he had already breakfasted, but would in about an hour wait on him.

Mrs. Dunstanville and her daughter were much disappointed at this answer; as their maid, Mary Bolton's account of him, had excited their curiosity. They mentioned their surprise to Lord Ellismore at Mr. Villars' appearing to know them so well, when they could not even bring his name as a former acquaintance to their recollection. His lordship could give them no information concerning Villars, further, than that he was tutor

to Mr. Listowel's son; and that he had been, previous to his entering that family, many years on the Continent, where he might have formed one of their society. It was evident they had made more impression on him than he did on them. Yet it was strange he could be forgotten —his manners were so much admired, he was a general favourite, and highly respected as the gentleman and the scholar.

"But," observed he, smiling, "I am neglecting my son's interest sadly in thus presenting him to your notice."

Mrs. Dunstanville laughed, and requested, notwithstanding his being so dangerous, that he would send to inquire for him; on which the message already mentioned was delivered.

CHAPTER IX.

"The afflictions of men would not be so numerous, if they did not—(God knows why they are formed so) endeavour, with such unwearied assiduity of imagination, to recal the recollections of past evils, rather than enjoy a present blessing."

At eleven o'clock, Villars, who was still on the watch, hoping once more to catch a glimpse of Eleanor, saw Talbot arrive; and, to his great relief, unaccompanied by Edward. He had a strong affection for that young man, and was wounded to the quick by his haughty impetuous behaviour; and anxiously hoped to avoid a meeting until he should show some contrition. However, he made every allowance for his youth, and for those aristocratic feel-

ings, which taught him to view as degrading, an alliance with one,

"To fortune, and to fame unknown."

But he flattered himself his pupil would write a penitential letter; such as might justify his again taking him into favour: and admit of his still acting, although at a distance, as his friend and Mentor.

He was anxious to see Lord Ellismore; but deferred his visit until he should have a certainty of finding him alone.

He had not long to wait: before an hour had elapsed, he heard Talbot and the two ladies descend the stairs, and pass on to the street, where he saw Talbot offer each of the ladies an arm, which was not refused by either. Villars was amazed:—'What could occasion this intimacy! Was it possible!' thought he. 'Could she, indeed, be the lady report said Talbot was to marry? He spurned the idea;—she was

represented—as old—and ugly. Eleanor could never have sat for that picture; although, he must acknowledge she was not considered handsome; and that, no longer in the first bloom of youth, she must be several years older than Talbot. However, from her maid's reply of 'not yet,' he was, on reflection, convinced she was now, as when he left her, betrothed; and that he must learn to command his feelings, and prepare to hear their match made the subject of conversation; perhaps to be told it as the news of the day.

A servant came from Lord Ellismore, to say his lordship expected him. He therefore hastened to his apartment, impatient to have this visit over before the ladies returned.

He found Lord Ellismore seated on a lounger; a table before him covered with papers, at which he appeared writing. He was a fine old gentleman, apparently about sixty; but, in reality, he had

attained his seventieth year. He was of the old court, retaining much of the foppishness of his early days. His eyes, like his son's, were dark and penetrating, much of their brilliancy still remaining.

Villars on seeing him occupied, offered to defer his visit. This the peer would not allow, but receiving him most graciously, motioned to a chair; and assured him that his presence was not the least interruption; on the contrary, he wished to converse with him, if Mr. Villars had then an hour to spare, on a subject that was most particularly interesting to him, and on which he should require his advice and assistance: but to render him master of the subject, it was necessary first to enter into a long detail.

On Mr. Villars assuring him he was then perfectly at leisure, Lord Ellismore continued.

"You met my son very lately at Listowel Park;—he mentioned you to me with the highest esteem, and speaks

largely of your sense and talents;—he flatters himself you class him amongst your friends."

"He does me great honour," said Villars, bowing. "He is a noble minded, spirited young man: one that any family would be proud to claim!"

"Yes, my boy is what he should be —what his family might expect. In his generation I do not dread my house being disgraced;—but I do not want to descant on his merits;—already you appear interested for him. I have only to tell you how he is circumstanced, and then to beg the aid of your good sense and friendly advice."

"You may command my services," returned Villars.

"I have first to tell you a long story; which, as you are perfectly unacquainted with my family, is necessary.

"My sister married Mr. Ramsey, the only son of the laird of Drumlennon, in the north of Scotland."

"Ramsey!" reiterated Villars, turn-

ing pale, and trying to conceal his emotion: which Lord Ellismore did not perceive, as he was still busily arranging the papers on the table.

"Yes," replied Lord Ellismore: "probably you have never heard my sister mentioned in our family. She never returned to Ireland, although her heart was with us: she never while she lived ceased to feel the strongest affection for her family, which she manifested, when any, even the most distant branches, came within her reach. The old laird, although indulgent in other respects, would never consent to their leaving Scotland, not even to visit his only daughter, at her seat in Yorkshire. She was married to Lord Dunstanville's youngest brother. The old laird, not choosing to enrich a southern,—gave her but a small portion; and it was supposed, by way of atonement, made a most extraordinary will;—obliging his grandson, William Ramsey, to marry

his cousin Eleanor Dunstanville, or to resign to her half his property. In which case, she was to take the name of Ramsey, and bear the family arms. But, should the refusal proceed from her, he was then at liberty to marry whomsoever he pleased. Eleanor would only be entitled to receive from him the sum of two thousand pounds, with the interest due from the time of her grandfather's decease, until his attaining his twenty first year.

"The old laird lived to a great age, and made this disposition of his property shortly before his death.

'Alas!' thought Villars; 'how well this odious contract is known to me! How much trouble would a few words save this old gentleman!'

Lord Ellismore continued—"Although they were such children, my nephew only ten years old, and his cousin five, yet old Drumlennon, when he felt his end approaching, wished to have them

married: this my sister very properly refused; but satisfied him by her solemn assurance, that she would early instil into her son's mind, the necessity of obeying his grandfather's will.

"In a few years, Mrs. Dunstanville became a widow, and went to reside in Northumberland with her brother-in-law, Lord Dunstanville: he was a widower: she undertook the management of his family, and was as a mother to his sons.

"My poor nephew, before he had attained the age of eighteen, lost both his parents, and from his father's anxiety to have him educated in Scotland, had never yet visited England, or seen his bride elect.—It was now thought adviseable by his guardians, of whom I was one, that he should, previous to his spending a few years in travelling, visit her at her uncle's, in Northumberland. They had already exchanged pictures; his was not handsome; and hers was

not such, as a man unacquainted with her virtues, could be supposed to fall in love with. However, he thought her countenance intelligent and prepossessing; and at all events, had no wish to resign his large estates; or, on the other hand, to force her to do so; but was resolved, if possible, to gain her affections; and to make her happiness his chief object.

"His first visit he requested might be to see me; he had from his mother, whom he adored, imbibed a strong affection for her family; except in that, he did not resemble her. He was a true Ramsey!—but still a diamond of the first water, although a rough and unpolished one." Lord Ellismore looked up, and saw anxiety and earnest attention pictured in Villars' countenance. He appeared gratified.

"You are, indeed," said he, "very kind to pay my story so much attention. Well, as I was saying, his ex-

terior did not resemble our family; he was very like his aunt, Mrs. Dunstanville; who, I hear you have seen.

Villars started.

"At least," continued Lord Ellismore, "we supposed so from an inquiry we heard you made last night; yet the ladies could not bring you to their memory. But to proceed: my nephew—for I may speak of him with pride as well as with pleasure,—here he paused, sighed, and brushed an unbidden tear from his eye—"was a noble-minded, spirited youth.—Excuse me, time will never reconcile me to his loss!"

"Good Heavens! You perplex me. May I ask you, is he not living?"

"You knew him then. Ah! I see by your agitation you were amongst those who knew his worth. My poor nephew! —Alas! must I tell you, sir, that your inference is too just—and that he is no more?"

Villars shook like an aspen leaf. "May I ask you what caused his death? —Not surely"—he paused, and turned deadly pale.

The old gentleman looked up, and was alarmed at Villars' change of colour.

"My good sir!" said he, "I fear you are ill! I see poor William had in you a warm friend—his cousin's refusal to fulfil the contract afflicted him very much!

"They were then on the Continent: unfortunately, whilst his feelings were thus irritated by his cousin's rejection of him, he met with some of his own countrymen, and with them, plunged in every dissipation. This mode of life, so unusual to him, brought on a fever of a malignant nature.

"Mrs. Dunstanville and her daughter nursed him with the greatest care, and never left his bedside for six weeks;—but all could not restore him—he was taken off in the bloom of youth—deeply

lamented by every one that knew him!" Here Lord Ellismore paused, and quickly recovering himself, continued.

"Prior to his going abroad he visited Longwood, and conceived the strongest affection for Henry.—In his illness,—or —indeed—I believe it was previous to his illness—I now remember,—it was the very night before he had the meeting with young Dunstanville. I suppose you heard of that foolish business?"

Villars sat leaning his face against his hand, which entirely concealed it from view. He now bowed assent.

His Lordship continued.

"I suppose you likewise heard the cause of quarrel?—Young Dunstanville, —the peer's second son—very improperly taking advantage of family intimacy,—declared himself Eleanor's lover,—gained her affections, although he knew the poverty of her family, and how she was situated:—and then, not contented with depriving poor Ramsey

of his bride, sought an opportunity of forcing him into a quarrel."

Villars could not sufficiently command his voice to speak, his whole frame was agitated.

The earl, to show how currently the facts he stated were believed, was seeking among his papers for a letter; which, on finding, he handed to Villars: who, when a little more composed, glanced it over, and said, as soon as he was able to command his voice —" I was then on the Continent, and formed a very different opinion.—You shall judge.—From Miss Dunstanville's having always lived with her uncle Lord Dunstanville, his second son, Charles, about her own age, was therefore her companion in childhood, and the friend of her riper years.—In short, they became firmly attached to each other before they had a thought of consequences;—their affection was of such standing, that it might be said to have

'grown with their growth;'—they were fast bound to each other by every endearing tie, long before they had heard of contracts, or knew the necessity of attending to pecuniary matters."

"Is it possible! they were then very much to be pitied.—The blame lay entirely with her mother and uncle.—But to return:—My poor nephew, conscious, that at his death Miss Dunstanville would be his heir at law, and thereby enabled to marry his rival, made his will previous to the duel, leaving her all his property, on condition she marry my son;—should he refuse, she is then sole mistress of the property.—But, should she decline the proffered alliance, my Henry will then be his heir, and thus raise the fallen honours of his house. Now, my dear Villars, I have made you acquainted with all the particulars.—I should demand your pardon for taking up so much of your time with this long story."

"Pray make no apology," said Villars; "it has been highly interesting to me.—I am impatient to hear how I can be serviceable to you."

"I wish you," said the earl, "to exert your influence with my son: remonstrate with him on the folly of hesitating a moment between poverty and riches. You may likewise drop a hint that the lady's accepting him is not so certain."

Villars scarcely breathed, whilst the earl continued.

"Her mother, however, has acquired great influence over her since her cousin's death. For, notwithstanding Mrs. Dunstanville's small income, in compassion to her daughter she allowed her to refuse Ramsey, and accept Dunstanville."

Villars started. "You amaze me!"

"Not more than the rest of the world;—but the wild youth," resumed the earl, "had gone off in a tangent, under the idea Ramsey would be ac-

cepted, and has never since been heard of. Now Miss Dunstanville will not, a second time, deprive the *mother* of riches, *who* would have sacrificed so much for her happiness; particularly now, when she can have no prior engagement:—surely, she must long ago have forgotten her thoughtless cousin!"

Villars hastily arose, saying—"The ladies are returning."

"I will not ask to detain you then, lest my son, who accompanies them, should suppose your advice influenced by my remonstrances. This door leads to another staircase. Remember, I entreat you will represent in the strongest colours to my son, the folly of thus trifling with his happiness, and my peace of mind; the poverty of his house rendering this match a matter of necessity."

Villars hastened away; he would not for worlds have remained, or have met any of the party: he went down a back

staircase, by which he narrowly effected his escape; when, shutting carefully the door of his little parlour, he threw himself down on the nearest chair, exhausted from the trying conversation that had just occurred. It raised a contrariety of feelings; one moment he was animated by the brightest hopes, flattering himself that he was still beloved, and that even Lord Ellismore feared Eleanor had not forgotten him: then despair would represent to his tortured mind the poverty, the disobedience he might lead her to, were he again to become her suitor. The letter he wrote to Mr. Kelly next disturbed him. Suddenly it occurred to him that Talbot might seek him; and as he was particularly anxious to avoid seeing him until he received the letters he expected, he snatched up his hat, and hurried out of the house.

CHAPTER X.

" O when in boyhood's happier scene
I pledg'd my love to thee,
How very little did I ween,
My recompense should now have been,
So much of misery!"

The next morning Villars lay in bed until a late hour, as the only means of avoiding Talbot, who was impatient to see him; but he was determined not to admit his visit until after the post came in. Whilst in this uncertainty he was unfit to see any one; much less one to whom it was expected he should make the greatest sacrifice, and give the most disinterested advice.

At length the expected letters arrived. With a trembling hand he opened the seal of Mr. Kelly's. He felt sick and faintish, and was obliged to sit down

before he could regain composure to read it.

The letter was expressive of the high opinion he had of Villars, and the happiness he should feel in consigning to his care his beloved child! But that, wonderful to relate, her affections, retired as they lived, had been long engaged, unfortunately to one who could not profit by the rich gift; his father having formed for him a more splendid alliance.

Mr. Kelly, however, suggested, that he might reasonably hope, in a little time, her partiality for him would fade away; and that, if Villars chose to persevere, there was every reason to hope she would give him the preference. At all events, from her extreme youth, it would be desirable to have her marriage deferred at least for a year.

Villars now breathed freely; he was again at liberty—he might again, without a breach of duty, think of his Eleanor, whom he loved so long and so ardently!

But could he profit by his liberty? Eleanor had, perhaps, almost forgotten him! Should he now revive her dormant passion, it would render her miserable; as he was convinced, from what he had just heard, that she would consider herself bound to obey her mother; who, with uncalculating extravagance, always exceeded her income: and now, having been so long in possession of the Ramsey property, it would probably be impossible for her to resign it without being dreadfully involved. His small fortune, although perhaps sufficient for himself and Eleanor, would be to Mrs. Dunstanville but as a drop in the ocean.

He next read Listowel's letter, in which his patron gave him to understand, that if his daughter remained steady in her attachment to him, they would, at the expiration of a year, consent to their union. Villars' face glowed with indignation at this haughty condescending epistle; and he felt grateful to

his early, though hopeless, attachment, which, in all probability, saved him from a desire to form so humiliating an alliance.

He then read Edward's letter, which was every thing he could wish; manly, affectionate, and extremely penitent for his past offences.

The waiter here interrupted him with a message from Talbot, who was going out, and begged to know if Mr. Villars would accompany him, or was at leisure to admit him.

Villars wrote a few lines in reply, to say he was confined to his room by a very bad headache; but he hoped in a few hours to be quite well, and requested Talbot would dine with him.

Talbot came at the hour appointed, and was alarmed on seeing his friend look so extremely ill: he begged to withdraw, fearing he was not equal to the exertion of talking.

Villars requested he would remain,

assuring him society would serve him, as his complaint was mostly on his spirits.

When dinner was over, Talbot wished to speak of his attachment to Louisa, but felt delicate of mentioning her; although, he knew Villars in proposing for her, was influenced entirely by the high opinion he had formed of her merit. He hoped, however, to lead him to speak confidentially. On the waiter being dismissed, they both appeared more inclined for conversation. Talbot commenced, by telling him the Listowels were expected in town the following day; "But," added he, smiling, "I suppose you have had letters to inform you of their arrival. How soon shall I have to congratulate you on being united to one of the loveliest young persons in the kingdom?"

"You do not, surely, think me so much the madman, as at my time of life to take a partner so young and so unformed!"

"She certainly requires a guide; just, Villars, such a man as you are,—a little, and a very little, of your gravity, would render her perfectly fascinating: it is all she wants to make her like Louisa. She is, many think, as beautiful; then, she is more accomplished!—her manners are charmingly easy, fashionable, and gay. You cannot quarrel with dame Fortune, when she has allotted you so fine a girl!"

Villars smiled:—"You have not, in this warm description, drawn the picture of an old bachelor's choice; I leave her for such gay young fellows as you are. But, jesting apart, her predilection for me is a mere childish whim—a caprice of fancy; she would be very miserable if indulged. But, my dear friend! a different fate awaits you in the amiable young woman selected for you by your father. You will find in her the intelligent companion—the sensible friend!"

Villars turned pale—his voice faltered. Talbot did not perceive his emo-

tion; but interrupting him in a gay impatient tone, said—"Just the wife suited to an old bachelor!—Pray take her off my hands!"

Villars started.—Talbot continued:—"I astonish you!—Allow me, before we speak further on this subject, to be very candid with you. I am encouraged to do so, partly by knowing more of your private affairs than perhaps you are aware."

Talbot merely alluded to his having proposed for Louisa; but now his friend's look of wild surprise, his extreme paleness, brought to his recollection the letter Edward received from him, in which he candidly declared he had a secret. He was impatient to relieve his mind; and therefore continued:

"You may perhaps wonder how I came to be so well informed: but, my dear Villars! I have to acquaint you we were both seeking the same object!"

Villars appeared evidently shocked, as he listened in increased amazement.

Talbot continued.—" However, when I have told you all, you will allow mine a prior claim."

" That is impossible !" replied Villars, dreadfully agitated : " I have known her from a boy ;—my affection for her is interwoven with my being !"

Talbot started. " There must be some mistake !—I was surely the first that talked to her of love ; and discovered all the graces hid under a straw hat and russet gown."

" I do not comprehend you.—Can it be possible," said Villars, almost smiling, " that you speak of Miss Kelly ?"

" Of my charming Louisa !" returned Talbot. " My dear friend ! do not let me in you find a dangerous competitor ! Not," said he, smiling, " that I fear your influence with the lady : but the old curate I know favours your suit."

Poor Villars felt relieved ; the colour returned to his face, and he rejoined in an altered tone.

" Here is a letter I received from him

this morning. You, I suppose, are the gentleman he alludes to?"

Talbot read the letter in silence, and returned it without comment.

Villars continued:—"I claim your promise of being candid;—is not the old gentleman correct in his statement? And," added he, in a lower tone, "does not this house contain your bride?"

"It contains," replied Talbot, gloomily, "my father's choice; but not mine."

"But I understand, in giving her up you will forfeit a large inheritance, left you by your cousin?"

"True! I shall forfeit my title to it," said Talbot; "but it will remain in the hands of the lawful owner."

"I hear on her part there may be some hesitation." Villars paused. "You cannot, in your present mood, have gained her affections; and she once before sacrificed this very property sooner than give her hand without her heart."

"She shall never again be reduced to

that sad necessity," said Talbot. "I would not for worlds deprive her of her lawful inheritance!—Were my affections even now at my own disposal, I would not declare my sentiments, unless certain of being accepted."

"Generous Talbot!—I honour your principles!—But, my dear friend! consult prudence as well as generosity!—Her affections may now be disengaged; your father never will consent to your marrying Louisa, as she has no fortune; and —"

"Oh! let him but see her!" interrupted her lover; "my father is a passionate admirer of feminine graces; and bountiful nature has amply compensated to her for the parsimony of fortune!"

"Do not deceive yourself," said Villars: "he will insist on your sacrificing love to duty. Miss Dunstanville's fortune is absolutely necessary to him. She is amiable!—Could you help loving her? a creature so exquisite!—When once

the knot is tied, you will find how imperious duty changes the feelings of man—at least of a religious man."

This was spoken with great trepidation of voice and manner. Talbot listened, evidently much embarrassed. After a long and painful pause, he at length replied—

"I find I have indeed deceived myself: you love Louisa?"

"I never loved her!" exclaimed Villars; "and circumstances have occurred since my arrival in town, that renders her refusal one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life."

"Joyful intelligence!—You will then be my friend, since not my rival?" demanded Talbot.

Villars smiled, and said—"I fear I must disappoint you every way." He continued: "I am very peculiarly circumstanced; and for reasons, of which you may one day judge the propriety, I must request this conversation may

never be renewed. Indeed, I am not entitled to demand your confidence, as I can make none in return."

"My dear friend! I have no curiosity to be made acquainted with your affairs further than you wish. Why therefore deprive me of the benefit of your counsel?"

"For reasons that shall be one day obvious to you; at the present I can say no more."

"I am disappointed; but I do not doubt your friendship. I will take you on your own terms: the forbidden subject shall not be again mentioned. Give me at least the pleasure of your company—dine with us to-morrow;—the ladies are impatient to see you!"

"It is impossible! My spirits are depressed; and it is my wish, whilst in town, to remain as private as possible."

Talbot shortly after took his leave.

Villars was in much better spirits. He had now a gleam of hope—it was

within the pale of possibility that Eleanor might have continued constant; and that she might, without offending her mother, be at liberty to dispose of herself. He likewise felt his mind satisfied that he had acted conscientiously towards Lord Ellismore; to whom he wrote a letter before he went to rest, to acquaint him how faithfully he had followed his instructions, in setting forth to his son the necessity of his marrying Miss Dunstanville. That the result of their conversation was not such as could give his lordship pleasure. He likewise informed him, that he was soon leaving town, and must in future decline all interference.

CHAPTER XI.

"Look on the picture! deem it not o'ercharg'd;
There is no trait which might not be enlarg'd:
Yet true to 'Nature's journeyman,' who made
This monster, when their mistress left off trade,
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or die."

Lord Ellismore related to Mrs. Dunstanville what had passed the preceding day in his conversation with Villars. The good lady wondered she had no recollection of one apparently so intimately acquainted with her and with her family.

As they were forming a variety of conjectures, the waiter entered with a letter for his lordship, who, not pleased with its contents, handed it, on the waiter's leaving the room, to Mrs. Dun-

stanville. She started on seeing the hand-writing.

"Good heavens! when did you get this letter? Who—where is the writer? —Can I see him?—But perhaps I had better not.—After so long an absence, I supposed him dead, and that death only could lay his restless spirit!"

"My good madam, I do not understand you! Do you inquire for the person who wrote this letter?"

"Dunstanville, whose loss my daughter deplores! I know his hand-writing! The name of Villars could not disguise it from me. Oh! tell me all you know of him!"

"You alarm me prodigiously—I have done irremediable mischief!—I told him your daughter was still attached to Dunstanville.—In short, I told him the whole story," said Lord Ellismore.

"But in what manner did you tell it? —It is of consequence I should know," said Mrs. Dunstanville; for even in re-

lating facts—and facts only—you can give them a colour, a bend, which the hearer's feelings may even magnify.—Do you comprehend me?"

"Not very clearly," replied his lordship.

"Well, I will tell you some particulars of which you are ignorant: and then your comprehensive mind will see the part necessary for us to act."

Lord Ellismore was surprised at the mysteriousness of her manner. She continued:

"Have you ever seen my niece, Sybella Dunstanville?"

"Never: I did not know you had a niece."

"She is the daughter of my poor husband's youngest brother. He has a fine place in Northumberland; Sybella's mother died whilst she was an infant. Her father, who (by the way) is a great oddity, and entertains a most sovereign contempt for the female sex,

never therefore made a second marriage: but not brooking that his branch of the noble house of Dunstanville should be represented by a female, adopted Lord Dunstanville's second son, Charles. From this letter I have not a doubt he and Mr. Villars are one!"

"Is it possible! Villars bears a character the very reverse of what you represent Charles Dunstanville," observed the peer.

"I must proceed with my story. Sybella, who was many years older than her cousin, conceived a strong aversion towards him, for thus supplanting her in her father's property. He, poor eccentric man, thought he had provided nobly for her, in giving her ten thousand pounds in addition to her mother's property—an estate of two thousand a year. Sybella thought otherwise, and never could forgive the usurper, as she called Charles; testifying her dislike in every possible man-

ner, delighting to aggravate her uncle's displeasure whenever poor Charles's gay temper and boyish frolics brought him into disgrace, until the stage of childhood was over, and he became, in her eyes, 'a marvellous proper man.' Certainly I must do justice to her discernment; at one-and-twenty he pleased universally, by his superiority of talent, playful fancy, artless manners, and benevolence of heart, which showed itself in every word he uttered. It was impossible to know him in habits of intimacy, as we all did, and not love him. Poor Eleanor!—He was remarkably tall, and large made for his time of life; and his very dark complexion gave him the appearane of maturer years."

"Sybella had several suitors. However, she either quarrelled with them, or they, on discovering her faulty temper, left her, at which no one could be surprised. She was at times wayward, peevish, and testy; one of her lovers

observed—'she was sour as a crab, and as bitter withal; and yet,' continued he, 'I cannot but allow she is talented, for I suppose there never was her equal in ingenuity for tormenting. She would die of envy otherwise; the sight of happiness makes her miserable.' I have known her, for no other cause, leave the room in a flood of tears, and complain that no one felt for her, no one understood her feelings. Thus, one by one her lovers left her.—She felt deserted, and condescended to notice her cousin Charles, and at length succeeded in persuading her father, that a match between her and Charles would not be very preposterous; and, that where the advantages of the alliance were so manifold, he should think himself highly honoured. Poor Charles was overwhelmed with mortification; he had been from a boy devoted to my Eleanor: an attachment perfectly inexcusable, as he was aware of her en-

gagement. He now endeavoured to deprecate his uncle's anger, and in the most conciliating manner to decline the honour intended him. Mr. Dunstanville's rage knew no bounds; he felt insulted in his daughter—banished him his presence, and declared his intention of altering his will. From that time Charles Dunstanville has never been heard of." She coloured, and added, with trepidation, "I believe Sybella can account for his disappearance—further she knows not—and is miserable to discover what is become of him. She now really loves him; he is become necessary to her happiness. —It is inconceivable the aversion she has taken to my poor Eleanor, for her undutifulness in preferring Charles to William Ramsey. This was partly the cause of our coming to Ireland; my law-suit was the pretence. I thought change of air and scene would be beneficial to my amiable child: her

spirits may here recover their former tone when away from her tormentor, of whose talent for teasing I have given you but a slight sketch. You may however depend on its being a faithful one. I can draw her in proper colours, as I am one of a very small number that she honours with her friendship."

"I do not envy you, and I pray I may never have such a friend, or hold fellowship with such a fiend," said he, smiling sarcastically.

Instantly a gloom spread over Mrs. Dunstanville's countenance; she looked up at him with a bitter triumphant expression, very unusual to her, and said —"Then, perhaps, we had better rest here and let matters take their course. For I confess, without Sybella's counsel, I am but a bad planner—but a child to her; she both plans and executes."

"I did not mean, my dearest Emily, to offend you: yet allow me to say, that in the present instance, I should

think, without much witchcraft, we might persuade a needy nobleman's son to marry a fine girl with five thousand pounds per annum, and a hundred thousand pounds in cash."

"I see by your supineness all will be lost," said Mrs. Dunstanville. Do you forget how young people can be influenced by love? I thought," said she, blushing and looking down, "you once felt this; and that my mother's hurrying me into that marriage with my poor dear Mr. Dunstanville was the only circumstance that could have prevented you from sacrificing all for me."

He smiled most contemptuously, most sarcastically; but she did not see him, as she held down her head. After a moment's pause he took her hand, and had only time to request she would forgive his impatience, and to assure her she should find him ever her willing slave; when they were interrupted by the waiter: he delivered a note to

Lord Ellismore from Mr. Listowel, who, with his family, was just arrived in town.

His lordship having read the note, sent a verbal answer, intimating he would wait on him in about an hour.

"I perceive," said Mrs. Dunstanville, "I must make a long story short, and cannot, for your edification, follow Sybella through all her intricacies."

"Oh, my dear madam! spare me the detail! She is, humbly begging your pardon, a most uninteresting personage. I cannot, for the life of me, see why she is brought forward!"

"I will," said she, smiling, "in pity to your impatience, explain in as few words as possible. Her rage and jealousy knew no bounds when she discovered her passion was slighted for Eleanor, who she treated cruelly; so much so, that I became alarmed lest my poor child should fall a victim to her wrath. She wanted a servant; I accordingly gave her up my maid,

Bolton: she esteemed her a treasure, as she had been agent in all her plans. From Bolton's long service in my family, I knew she would screen my Eleanor from every threatened mischief. Yet Bolton acted ungratefully by poor Charles, whom she knew from a boy. How could she be so heartless as to join against him and assist Sybella in contriving a quarrel between him and William Ramsey! My niece esteemed that a good hit, one that certainly would prove his ruin, and satiate her thirst for revenge. For, if Ramsey's sword spared him, his having fought a duel would, she considered, be sufficient to destroy any remaining tenderness his uncle might feel towards him. The event far exceeded her expectations: he was driven from her father's presence, and by her arts banished, or rather spirited away, at a time when she made me pretend to Eleanor, that I would consent to her marrying Charles

Dunstanville. My heart smote me when my poor child overwhelmed me with her gratitude; I had next to witness her despair, her anguish, when he was not to be heard of; which, at length, Sybella shared, on his continuing absent. However, her scheme answered. At the end of a year I worked on Eleanor's generosity: she consented to marry young Ramsey at that time—ill of the typhus fever.—Poor fellow! he never recovered!—You know his story. When Sybella's anger cooled she became miserable about her cousin Charles, and"—

"My dear madam! do not for a moment let her sufferings disturb you. What use can we make of this little bit of deformity? She absolutely oppresses me."

"What use? How dull men are! Do you not see my drift?—If we do not look sharp, Dunstanville will run away with the rich prize."

"He is not a wild youth now, seven

years have sobered him; and pray take into consideration, she would be no rich prize to him.—We should claim the forfeited estates; therefore, you may perceive, my dear madam! how unnecessary it is that I should have any dealings with your witch."

"Self interest! how it sets all the world in motion! Where is now the romance of character I have for so many years admired in you? Then, you spoke of the happiness you should feel in having your son united to my daughter. Know, sordid man, you can come at the riches no other way! Ramsey, charmed, and softened by Eleanor's affectionate care of him, in his last illness, left her his *sole* heir without restraint.—Sybella made us keep this last act of his a profound secret, lest we should lose the strong hold we have, of governing her by the generosity of her temper; for, even if Dunstanville now appeared, she would not take advantage of the consent

I gave to her marrying, lest she should plunge me in poverty.—Oh! she is an angel! So pure, that, but for Sybella's influence, and—" continued she, looking at Lord Ellismore, and smiling—" the attachment I once felt for an ingrate, I would let the dear girl choose happiness her own way. As it is, I will take no further step, except to let Sybella know by letter, of Dunstanville's being here; you and she may then manage the rest. I have now told you every thing; make your own uses of my information; and, if you condemn the machinations I have acquiesced in, you have only to let Eleanor know Dunstanville is in the house—in the very room under her.—She will bless you, and so will I! I would give the world for her happiness! but I fear Sybella, she would maliciously discover all to my child, who would then despise me: as it is, all her virtues are as coals of fire on my head. I often fear I trifle with her hap-

piness, and that I sacrifice more than I ought to indulge my own ambition, and to further the wishes of that little piece of deformity, as you justly call her. She is as crooked in person as she is in mind, and never could attain five feet in growth; she therefore laughs at the light flexible figure of her rival, calling her a May-pole. But, as I was saying, I should fear we carried matters too far, did I not remember, that when I married poor dear Mr. Dunstanville, I hated him; and, as you well know, loved another. Yet, after a little time, I was very happy: he gave me every indulgence; I was completely my own mistress; and had I married you, I should have—we will not pursue the subject."

"Do not, pray," said the peer; "for even at this distance of time, I cannot think with composure of having lost you. You are going: may I depend on your silence?"

"You may. I go to add a postscript in my letter to Sybella."

"Would it not be better to keep her in ignorance of Dunstanville's being here?"

"I dare not: she would, through the medium of my people, gain immediate intelligence; and, from anger at my silence on the subject, mar all our plans."

She then quitted the room, leaving Lord Ellismore very much crest-fallen. He disdained Sybella's aid, and would not league with her for worlds; yet he feared giving up the match must be the inevitable consequence of refusing.

Shortly after he paid Mr. Listowel a visit, one of mere ceremony; his spirits were too low to enter with him, as he intended, on the subject of his son's marriage.

Villars was there. Listowel sent him to seek Mary, whom he found in the drawing room with her mother. She

was very much abashed on his entrance, and almost fainted: he tried to reassure her, and by the time Edward came in she was tolerably composed, and anxiously observed what terms he was on with Villars.

Edward was overjoyed, and yet ashamed to see his friend, who, by his kind and affectionate manner set them all at ease.

He was very sorry to find they did not take his letter as a refusal of the honour intended him: on the contrary, they appeared to consider him as one of the family. He felt dreadfully annoyed; and in consequence shortened his visit, pleading an engagement. They pressed him to return to dinner, which he positively refused, but promised to call in the evening.

CHAPTER XIV.

A fawning treachery, against which no prudence can guard, no courage can defend. The insidious smile upon the cheek would warn him of the canker in the heart.

JUNIUS.

VILLARS felt highly flattered at the friendly reception he met with from the Listowels; it lessened unpleasant impressions. He would have returned in the evening, but as he was quitting the house he met Robert Belmont in the hall. This at once decided him on sending his apology. He accordingly, on his return to the hotel, wrote a few lines to Mary, requesting, she would have the goodness to read in private a packet he was preparing for her perusal. As their interviews would be liable to frequent interruption, he had adopted

this method of addressing her: and implored her not to censure him for trespassing so much on her time.

He gave this note to Edward's servant at the time he knew she was dressing, desiring it should be delivered immediately.

This matter being arranged, he went to take a walk by the canal, hoping the air would relieve his head, cool the feverish heat of his temples, and render him equal to the task he had undertaken. A most painful one he considered it, yet due to the wounded feelings of his young friend.

As he was returning from his walk, he met Lord Ellismore, with Mrs. and Miss Dunstanville, going to dine with the Listowels. He did not perceive them until they were near him; and on looking towards Eleanor, found her eyes fixed on him with earnestness; her flushed cheeks, and agitated manner, expressing that she hoped he was her

cousin Charles, yet greatly feared to address him, lest she should be mistaken.

When their eyes met, the look of recognition, of delight, expressed in his countenance, made her no longer hesitate. She involuntarily held out her hand: he was advancing to take it, when Lord Ellismore, in a very forbiding manner, said—"Mr. Villars, are we to meet you at Mr. Listowel's?" Eleanor dropped her hand, supposing she must be mistaken; and slunk back abashed, hoping her supposed error would pass unnoticed. Villars bowed, and walked on, but not until he witnessed poor Eleanor's disappointment. He could no longer doubt her love; or her being, as ever, willing to resign for him, poor and forgotten as he was, all her splendid prospects—a sacrifice he was determined never to demand of her;—but, on the contrary, he would leave her to act towards Talbot, unbiassed even by a

knowledge of his existence. For although they had met that evening, yet, he saw Lord Ellismore's interference taught her to doubt her senses. He was conscious that his exterior, during the six years that had separated them, was much changed; his form was more athletic, his complexion more bronzed, and his countenance of a sadder cast. He was surprised at Lord Ellismore's cold, scornful glance, and almost feared, when he recollected the strict scrutiny he underwent in the morning at Mr. Listowel's, from his lordship, that he must have had some suspicion of who he was; and perhaps feared him as his son's rival. Still, amidst many tormenting ideas, Eleanor's love was balm to his mind, and he continued digesting those sweet and bitter thoughts, until the time allotted for writing to Mary was nearly elapsed. He was anxious that she should receive it before she arose in the morning, as it would ensure her reading

it in private, without the appearance of mystery; which he deemed, however innocent, a dangerous expedient for a young lady.

He would not for worlds that any conduct of his should, in future, be brought forward in her volatile mind as a precedent; or, as an apology, for her servant being trained to convey her epistles, perhaps, of a different character from his.

In the mean while, poor Mary was in the lowest spirits. When Villars took his leave, she retired to her own chamber, to hide from every eye her mortification and disappointment, at not finding him all joy and rapture; and at his not rewarding her discernment by claiming her proffered hand, and vowing eternal love to her, and gratitude to her parents. On the contrary, melancholy reverse, he was no lover. She could no longer deceive herself; and now, deeply deplored her want of delicacy in placing

herself and parents in such an awkward predicament. 'Ah!' thought she 'had I listened to Louisa, I should not thus be slighted and rejected!'

The dressing bell rung whilst she was thus lamenting the foolish jealousy that prevented her attending to that excellent young person's advice; and not choosing that her maid should witness her affliction, hastily bathed her eyes in rose-water, and prepared for dressing; her toilette was soon made; and, as if to flee from her own reflections, she hastily descended to the drawing room, where she found her mother and Robert Belmont.

He accosted her on her entrance: observing she appeared dejected, he said sarcastically—"Why, my dear Miss Listowel, do you look so sorrowful?—why become so silent? I believe you have not deigned to utter more than a monosyllable these last twelve hours! An air of

such deep reflection in *you* is so novel—your eyes cast down to the ground, like a novice just about to forsake the world. Or is this manner a whim? Trust me your natural manner is more becoming; your heedless gaiety renders us all your willing slaves! Are you not happy?—Who is, if you are not?"

"I am sick of hearing of my happiness!" said Mary, looking at him with surprise and displeasure; and then turning to her mother, inquired when she was to see her sister Frances.

"She will be in town to-morrow."

Belmont would not let the conversation take this turn, but interrupting the mother and daughter, said, with a countenance full of meaning—"I met Villars on the stairs this morning, to my great surprise, as I thought you had parted with him."

"He is my son's preceptor no longer; he visits us, and is our friend."

"Friend! How fond you are of those

undescribable friends! I do not cultivate such."

"Undescribable friends! Pray explain," said Lady Elizabeth.

"Friends, for whom you cannot answer these simple questions of—'Who is he?'—'Where does he come from?'—Pray, ladies, can either of you reply to these simple questions for Mr. Villars?"

Mary reddened with indignation, but still continued silent.

"I see it is as I suspected," continued Belmont. "He was evidently so much alarmed, so out of countenance, when I hazarded a question or an opinion that was at all leading, and might oblige him to declare himself."

"I do not understand, Mr. Robert Belmont," said Mary, with a spirit she could no longer controul, "why you should take such liberty with my father's guest; and one in whom he placed a trust of such magnitude; I should think, his possessing Mr. Lis-

towel's confidence, might be a recommendation, at *least* for the honour of your acquaintance; and save him from further investigation."

"Have I angered *it*?" said he, smiling, and looking towards Lady Elizabeth. "I crave your pardon," continued he, with a soft hypocritical air, addressing Mary; "I should not, perhaps, have mentioned him; those tell-tale blushes evince he is a tender subject.—Report says," continued he, turning to Lady Elizabeth, "that he coveted a rich medal in your possession—impressed with your image; and," said he, smiling, "just fresh from the mint, the rough edges not smoothed or polished off yet."

"I wish," said Lady Elizabeth, "you would leave those rough edges to time, and not deal with them so roughly."

"Of course," resumed Mr. Belmont, "this medal was esteemed too precious to be given into such ignoble hands; he therefore solicited for one bearing

nearly the same impression, but coined of base adulterated metal." Here Belmont looked from one to the other for an answer. Tears of indignation chased each other down Mary's cheeks; and, when she could no longer with her hand conceal them, she took up a book that lay beside her, and left the room.

Lady Elizabeth looked distressed; and with some trepidation of voice, said —"The base metal, as you call Louisa, refused Villars!"

"Is it possible? But the girl has spirit. She is beautiful, and may make a better market."

"How could you talk so unguardedly before Mary?"

"Pardon me; my intention was to send her out of the room. Three is a very awkward number for conversation." He added with a gay air—

"However, I still think with all due deference
To the fair single part of the creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In *tête-à-tête* or general conversation—

And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation—
Because they know the world, and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please."

"You are a strange creature! Why do you fancy yourself thus privileged?"

"No," replied he, "not so strange as you think. My conduct shall always lie open to your inspection; a child could see my motive:—a strong regard for you; a curiosity, an interest in every thing that concerns you.—Did you see Louisa after I left the Park?"

"How can you ask such a question? I can never bear her in my sight!"

"So I should have supposed; but, that I heard you sent Miss Listowel to take leave of her," returned Belmont.

"Most strange! Of course, you know me better than to believe it?"

"I might have refused credence, but that I knew her visiting Louisa, and with Mr. Listowel, was a fact."

"You astonish me! I must then have been imposed on: otherwise why this attachment, this favour to a stranger?"

"Oh! I could tell you a great deal more that would astonish you! But the Dunstanvilles are coming."

CHAPTER XV.

"I am a lonely, heart-abandon'd man!"

EARLY the next morning, Mary received the promised packet from Villars. It was some time before she could find courage to break the seal. 'He certainly,' thought she, 'is not my lover. Should he now assume the stern tutor and lecture me! Oh, no! he is the gentlest, the meekest of human beings!' This reflection giving her courage, she opened the letter, and read as follows :—

"Where shall I find terms to express
"to you, my dearest pupil, the grate-
"ful sense I entertain of your heroic
"generosity, in thus offering to sacrifice
"for me, all your gay prospects of rank

" and fortune, and consenting to be-
" come the partner of one so dejected
" and broken spirited!

"Were I to accept of such a sacrifice,
" I should, indeed, be lost to honour
" and principle; and should be guilty
" of a most serious fraud :—stealing
" you from yourself, binding you by
" solemn ties, at an age, when the judg-
" ment rarely keeps pace with the
" exterior form, and when prudence
" seldom checks enthusiasm.

" During these last six years, you
" have been an object of the highest in-
" terest to me; I have observed, with
" parental solicitude, the progress of
" your education. Ever watchful to
" counteract, as far as I dared, the
" pernicious tendency of your French
" governess's precepts—shall I say how
" flattered I have been, from time to
" time, by finding your understand-
" ing always open to conviction? and
" that you rewarded my humble en-

" deavours for your instruction with " the tenderest affection, and a grati- " tude too sensitive?—regarding exer- " tions which were only your due, as " obligations that could never be re- " quited. This, my dear young friend, " is the principle that at present ac- " tuates you: young people are very " apt to mistake their sentiments,—the " chief cause, I believe, of so many " marriages turning out miserably.

" I do not mean to assert, that love " is absolutely necessary to happiness. " To some minds, it is more so than " to others; but, I conceive a certain " suitableness of temper—of manners— " taste — and disposition — absolutely " necessary; so that each should have " an influence over the other;—to keep " up their good intentions, and to de- " velop any good quality they saw lying " dormant; to be to each other a se- " cond conscience. These duties could " never be observed without the most " unfeigned attachment.

" I have long studied the various " traits of your character, and think " it of the utmost importance, that your " partner in life, should be of an age " and disposition suited to your years. " He should have sense, and steadiness " to prevent your suffering from the " gaiety and enthusiasm of your charac- " ter: he should likewise have youth, " and vivacity to find his pleasures in " yours. It is dangerous for a young, " lively, and beautiful woman, to enter " the gay scenes of life alone, and to " have a husband too much absorbed " in his own pursuits to attend to hers.

" You will, I know, pardon the free- " dom with which I address you, and " will believe it is dictated by the " purest friendship: whilst I live, I " shall feel the liveliest interest in what- " ever concerns you, and it will be " the study of my life, to prove myself " worthy of your esteem.

" In the course of a few days, it will " be necessary for me to leave the king-

" dom. From some circumstances that
" have lately come to my knowledge,
" I should not be surprised if report
" deal hardly with me in my absence;
" and, lest a suspicion should be raised
" in your mind against me, it is my
" wish, if I do not trespass too much
" on your time, to tell you how I am
" situated; to tell you who your tutor
" is; and to tell you how he has escaped
" the magic of your charms!"

He then related every particular of his story; how he had been attached to his cousin, Miss Dunstanville; and deceived by Sybella into a belief that his flight was necessary to Eleanor's happiness; and that now, he believed, from the new engagement she was about entering into, his presence might distress her. He, therefore, intended immediately returning to England—perhaps to his uncle—if, on inquiry, should find the old gentleman had given

up the idea of marrying him to Sybella. That, as soon as he knew his destination, she should hear from him, and then have his permission to show his letter to her father, as he could not endure the idea of leading her into a clandestine correspondence. Unfortunately at present, repugnant as it was to his feelings, he must request of her to keep this letter, this history of his misfortunes, concealed from every eye; it was his wish she should seal it, and give it to her father, informing him under what circumstances she had received it: and that, if Mr. Listowel should then think proper to open it, she might give him permission. He concluded, with many good wishes for her, and her family; declaring, that whilst he lived, he should remain her faithful and attached friend.

Mary read this long letter over and over again. It raised a variety of emotions; some tears would flow, and burn-

ing blushes scorched her cheeks at the idea of being refused—of having her love rejected.—Then again she would consider Villars judged her properly—and that he knew her character better than she did herself. — 'Perhaps,' thought she, 'according to his picture of wedded love, he is not the man formed to make me happy!' At the same time, she felt that her thirst after knowledge, and her desire after excellence wa sunbounded; and, although their amusements and pursuits differed, yet, still his influence was so great, and his power, whether from habit or from love, so undisputed; that, she felt in resigning him, she gave up all hopes of becoming that steady character he had ever held up to her view. But, in lamenting Villars' misfortunes, Mary soon forgot *self*, and gulping down the disappointment of her pride and affection, she generously considered, if it were possible, that she could serve him

with Miss Dunstanville; and felt, that could she be made instrumental to his happiness, it would very much lessen the bitterness of her feelings, and prove to her friends that she was not a mere love-sick girl. Her hopes were raised very high from Talbot's attachment to Louisa; and she thought it impossible that any one loving, and beloved by Villars, could, in the space of seven or eight years forget him; she longed again to see Miss Dunstanville; and was planning a hundred ways by which she could discover her disposition towards him. She regretted having paid her very little attention the preceding evening, her spirits were so low in consequence of Robert Belmont's attack: but, on recollection, Eleanor appeared quite as low, and Mrs. Dunstanville seemed anxious about her.

Mary feared, Villars was so very miserable in his present situation, that he might hasten his departure; she there-

fore wrote him a few hurried lines as follows :—

" My dear Mr. Villars,

" Allow me, a little longer, to call " you by that name, by me ever to be " revered. I write in great haste, as the " breakfast-bell has rung, to tell you " I am most deeply interested by the " melancholy detail of your sufferings. " I shall see your Eleanor to-day, and " assiduously cultivate her friendship, " that I may discover what are her " intentions towards Mr. Talbot. He, " I know, loves Louisa; my father told " me so, and thinks they will be mar- " ried. Perhaps I am wrong in repeat- " ing this—but I cannot withhold from " a poor drowning man this straw to " catch at; particularly, as I wish to " detain you a little longer in Ireland. " —Pray do not sail, at least, until " you hear from me again. You need " have no hesitation about writing to

" me. I may receive your letters openly;
" it will be sufficient to my dear parents,
" to say, they come from you.

" The strong anxiety I now feel for
" promoting your happiness with Miss
" Dunstanville, proves you knew me
" better than I did myself. I am sum-
" moned, and have only time to add,
" that with many prayers for your hap-
" piness, I remain your

" Affectionate
" MARY."

" P.S. Remember, you are not to go without hearing from me again."

Mary hastily folded this note, desiring her maid to have it speedily delivered.

Had she a moment for reflection, she would not have sent it, as the latter part was blistered by her tears.

She met Edward in the anti-room. He was shocked on observing how pale she was, and that her eyes were red.

Kissing her affectionately, he tenderly inquired how she was, and if she were happy.

Mary replied, she had every reason to be so; but, that her mind was restless and anxious. She said, she often thought of poor Louisa, and wished her mother would, according to her first intention, invite her to Dublin.

Edward smiled, and shook his head: "I advise you not to mention her name!"

Mary was all curiosity; but was obliged to restrain it, as her mother came to seek her, and led her into the breakfast room.

Her parents were alarmed on seeing her look so ill, and proposed taking her to Holly Mount; but she entreated to be allowed to remain a little longer in Dublin; alleging as a reason, that she wished to cultivate her acquaintance with Miss Dunstanville.

"We will certainly indulge you, my dear Mary!" replied her father. "Miss

Dunstanville's manners are uncommonly pleasing; she seems well informed; her countenance intelligent; and so much good sense in her conversation, that I think her a most desirable companion for you. Fortunately they have taken that beautiful cottage near us: we shall, I hope, be as one family. They remain in town only whilst their carriage is repairing, and then we shall have them as long as vacation lasts."

"Vacation, papa!—Has she a little brother or sister?"

Listowel hearing voices in the hall, did not wait to answer: but Robert Belmont, who had hitherto sat silent, now laughed rudely.—"She does not forget her school.—Pray, Miss Listowel, how long does your vacation last?—But, I beg pardon—I forgot you are coming out. What does Lord Byron say?

'Tis true your budding Miss is very charming;
But shy and awkward at first coming out;
So much alarm'd, that she is quite alarming,
All giggle, blush! half pertness, and half pout!

And glancing at mamma, for fear there's harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about,
The nursery still lisps out in all they utter;
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter!

He repeated these lines with the most provoking action; and then, turning to Lady Elizabeth, with a sentimental air, said—"Your ladyship remembers the verse following; at least, I had the honour of repeating it to you yesterday."

Lady Elizabeth looked displeased, and replied with a cool, haughty air—"If my memory does not fail me, Mr. Belmont, it was on a similar occasion; after behaving—what shall I say?—not, at least, with your usual politeness to my darling."

Robert was afraid he had allowed his spleen to carry him too far, and was preparing to apologise; when the entrance of Listowel, with Lord Ardsallagh and Mr. Stockdale called off their attention. Mary went to salute her uncle, who received her most graciously,

saying, she was indebted to him for Mr. Stockdale's company.—" He made fifty excuses to avoid coming here; so much so, that if you had not received him so cordially, I would have supposed you had parted in dudgeon."

Mary laughed, and coloured; she knew to what her uncle alluded—now, to her, a most mortifying recollection. She felt her eyes filling with tears, and a quiver in her lip, that obliged her to give up the attempt of speaking. She tried to conceal her emotion by a pretended fit of coughing; dreading lest it should afford Robert Belmont an opportunity of again levelling at her his rude satirical remarks. She made a great effort; and whilst they were all exchanging compliments on meeting, Mary entirely recovered her self-possession, and was able even to conceal her mortification under the appearance of good spirits. She asked her uncle what detained him so long at Sea View.

Lord Ardsallagh coloured; gave a hurried unintelligible answer; looking, she thought, as foolish as she had done herself a few minutes before. 'Ah!' thought she, 'a lady must be in the case!—Villars was right, when he said I should learn much from time and experience!—A short month ago, and this language of looks would have been as abstruse to me as Edward's Hebrew Primer.' She smiled at her own sagacious reflections; and delighted that she could have an advantage, on a topic she was herself so vulnerable in, resolved to commence an attack, as the best method of keeping him in order.

"Pray, did Mary-Anne draw Lady Rumbold's picture?"

"She did," replied her uncle.

"I suppose, from your remaining so long in the country, she stretched a canvass for you likewise?" inquired Mary.

"She did not," replied he, smiling, "make me a separate picture."

"What!—were you put in the family piece?" asked his niece.

"I was."

"I suppose then, Mrs. Belmont has sentenced you to marry one of her daughters," said Mary, archly.

"Not exactly; I had my choice of evils," exclaimed her uncle; "either to take *Car.* who was to be married before her younger sister; or, otherwise—" he paused, and blushed deeply. "My resemblance was to occupy one of the picture frames in the back-ground of the picture—the one allotted to Lady Rumbold's mate; who, as one of the family, is allowed into the picture. It was a whim of Mary-Anne's, and my picture was drawn, before her ladyship knew it was in contemplation."

"What did Mrs. Belmont say?" asked Mary.

"She was so angry, that Mary-Anne contrived a picture of her brother Robert completely to cover mine; and the real frame fits so exactly over the painted

one, that Mrs. Belmont is not aware, that Lady Rumbold may, at option, figure with me or Belmont."

"I know who she will choose;" said Mary, with an arch glance at her uncle.

"You gipsey! But I forgive you, since you received Stockdale so graciously. He would not have come in," he added in a lower voice, "but that we heard Villars was banished."

"Dear uncle! How?"

"I will have no explanations now, my pretty niece!—That distressed look, those blushing cheeks, speak all! We have had no breakfast yet."

He called Stockdale. They seated themselves one at each side of Mary, who filled out their tea, and was presently engaged with them in lively conversation.

Belmont could with difficulty conceal his uneasiness. He seldom entered into his mother's plans; but, for some time past, he had been very low in cash; and

she promised, when her favourite wish was accomplished, that her generosity to him should be unbounded. He was always, she said, her *white-headed boy!* and that, when Mary-Anne was married to Stockdale, he should have fine *dandy* clothes, and his purse full of gold. This promised purse being very necessary to the fine gentleman, induced him to assist in making the match; and, until Mary appeared, he had promising hopes of success. He could now no longer deceive himself; Stockdale's passion for that lovely girl was so very evident. Still he hoped to bring it about by stratagem; or, at least, to deceive his mother into thinking 'that matters were going on *swimmingly*'—when it would be easy to induce her to give him the promised reward. In consequence of this plan, he gave Stockdale the earliest information of Mary's attachment to Villars; and then found it no difficult matter to send him to Sea View.

Lady Rumbold, and Lord Ardsallagh, were to follow. However, Mr. Stockdale, soon discovering Mrs. Belmont's aim, paid but a short visit; and, on his return to Dublin, had the satisfaction of hearing from Talbot, that there was no treaty of marriage pending between Mary and Villars; and of hearing a full detail of all that had passed between them; but, softened, and related so favourably to Mary, that Stockdale now considered every obstacle to his paying her his immediate addresses removed. He was delighted with the frank cordiality of his reception, for which he was in some measure indebted to Robert Belmont; the rudeness of whose attack made her turn with a feeling almost amounting to friendship, to one she knew so devoted to her. This feeling towards him did not abate, when she saw Belmont continue to watch her with a malignant eye; and, as if on the watch to say something wounding to

her feelings. At length, he contrived to make one in their party; but Mary, feeling herself safe in the protection of her uncle, continued a lively conversation with Stockdale: her spirits were completely rallied, as the true motive of her enemy's splenetic looks occurred to her; recollecting Mrs. Belmont's praising him for his brotherly affection; saying, that, indeed, his heart was set on Mary-Anne's catching the young squire of Drumore. She smiled at the idea, and was still more gracious to Stockdale.

Belmont could no longer restrain his temper: he turned towards her, his upper lip curled with a sarcastic smile, as he abruptly inquired when she had seen Villars.

Mary replied, looking rather confused, "Yesterday."

"Is Miss Kelly to wear the willow?" said he, attempting an arch smile.

"I do not comprehend you," returned Mary.

"Well, I will explain. You know," said he, with emphasis, "what a Lothario Villars is among the ladies!—a perfect gay deceiver!—"

He was continuing, when Lord Ardsallagh, who had observed Mr. Belmont's studied impertinence to his niece on more occasions than the present, was now highly displeased at the unprovoked rudeness of the attack: and, looking at him with haughty contempt, said, in a tone quite imperative—"You should remember, Mr. Belmont, that Mr. Villars is highly respected by every branch of this family; some of us entertain for him the sincerest friendship! You will therefore be aware, that scandal concerning him, however meant in raillery, will not be well received here!"

This reprimand brought Belmont completely to his senses. He had early learned to conceal his ill temper, when in company with his superiors: conscious that his family interest was small,

that he had to look to others for future greatness, and sometimes for present expenses. Belmont, therefore, looking very contrite, hoped Lord Ardsallagh would do him the justice to believe he meant no offence; he was only jesting with Miss Listowel.

Listowel now approached, desiring Mary to accompany him on a visit to the Dunstanvilles. It was arranged, they were afterwards to meet Lord Ardsallagh at the fair widow's.

CHAPTER XVI.

On the way to Mrs. Dunstanville's, Listowel asked his daughter, what terms she was on with Villars; and expressed his surprise, at his avoiding all conversation with him.

"He desired me to speak to you; and," said she, hesitating, "to tell you —"

"When had you a conversation with him?—He was with us but for a few moments:—then you were too ill to speak. Surely, Mary, when we have behaved so liberally, you will enter into no clandestine proceedings?"

"Oh, no! Listen to me, before you condemn either of us," said Mary.

Listowel felt her trembling, and that the support of his arm was necessary. She proceeded in a hurried tone:—"I

have had a long letter from Mr. Villars this morning; which, he begs of me to seal, and give to you; requesting, you will not for the present read it."

"Have *you* read it?" inquired Listowel.

"Yes, but I am not to mention its contents, unless you insist on it. He goes very soon to England, and, I believe, my dear father!—" She paused, her utterance was interrupted, and large drops chased each other down her pale cheeks. At length, she said—"We shall never see him again!"

Her father was much shocked at seeing her so affected.—"Compose yourself, my dear Mary! hold your veil down, or we shall be observed.—But you amaze me!—Does he not, with gratitude, accept the offer made? The scoundrel! to steal my daughter's affections!—"

He stopped, alarmed at seeing she could scarcely restrain her sobs. They were then in Rutland Square; he brought

her into the gardens, which, at that hour, were quite private, until her emotion should subside; as soon as she could speak, she said:—

"Yes, my father, your child has been rejected.—But be not angry; he has behaved in the handsomest manner; and has persuaded me I never felt more for him than friendship."—She paused, and added more cheerfully:—"I believe, papa, he is right; and that, when you all forget my folly, I shall be happy again. Will you not tell mamma and Edward? But do not mention the letter, as they are not to see it."

Her father tried to console her, and, when they had taken a turn in the gardens, Mary was sufficiently composed to resume their way.

When arrived at the hotel, he sent his daughter up stairs to the Dunstanvilles, whilst he visited Villars. He felt far from satisfied by Mary's account, and dreaded, from her gay spirits that morn-

ing, and encouragement of Stockdale, that the change arose from her fickleness of disposition.

He found Villars looking very ill; his breakfast lay untouched.

Listowel's proud and angry feelings vanished: he felt only commiseration for the poor invalid. What could, he thought, have wrought such a change.

Villars essayed to speak: Listowel stopped him. "Do not, my dear friend! distress yourself: Mary has communicated to me what you desired. The packet shall remain sealed, every thing shall be as you wish; but, at the same time, allow me to observe, I might prove a more sagacious counsellor than my daughter.—If you want a friend, I may have, perhaps, the power,—you cannot find one more faithful or more willing to serve you: only point out the way; my time, my money, my interest is at your service."

"I am truly grateful to you, my re-

vered patron.—I did not mean to consult Miss Listowel; only to make known to her my misfortunes: I considered I owed her this confidence; I wished, likewise, to explain to her, what her sentiments towards me were: merely arising from gratitude for services over-rated. To you, my dear sir, I may observe, that whatever in her conduct has caused you uneasiness, is the result of the improper system of education pursued by *Madame*. Miss Listowel is of an uncommon, generous disposition, and abhors the idea of acting from interested motives."—He next detailed how her French governess had instructed her to attract the notice of the young noblemen and rich commoners; and then related how these instructions had operated in her behaviour to Stockdale.

Listowel cordially thanked him; and observing he was much better, invited him to join the party up stairs.

Villars excused himself; saying, he

was too much engaged with business to think of visiting; and that he intended sailing that evening, or the next.

Listowel then left him, and was ushered into the presence of Mrs. Dunstanville and her daughter: he engaged them, with Lord Ellismore, to dinner: and then entered into conversation with his lordship, who was sitting apart from the ladies.

Mary and Eleanor were in high conversation, and appeared mutually pleased with each other. On hearing of the invitation to dinner, Mary requested her new friend to spend the morning with her. She joyfully assented; but her mother refused her permission, dreading Villars would be of the party, as Mary, on her first entrance, mentioned her father being with him: she therefore apprehended his accompanying Mr. Listowel to their apartment, and was, on his entrance, meditating to send Eleanor out of the room.

Mary thought Eleanor's countenance changed on Villars' name being mentioned; but, as she doubted her own power of observation, she spoke of him again, and lamented his intention of returning to England.

"I should fear," said Miss Dunstanville, "he is in a bad state of health."

"Indeed! for what reason?" inquired her young friend.

"He fainted the first evening of our arrival; and since, on the plea of indisposition, refused every invitation to join our party: from what I hear, he knows our family; I was, on that account, anxious to see him."

"Eleanor, my dear!" said Mrs. Dunstanville, "what are you doing with Sybella's letter; you are twisting it so hard I shall not be able to decipher it. What day does she say we may expect her?"

"The day after to-morrow," replied Eleanor.

Listowel now reminded his daughter it was time to meet her uncle at Lady Rumbold's.

"Does Mr. Villars accompany us?" demanded Mary.

"No; he is engaged with business, and sends you his adieus by me, as we see him no more before he sails."

Mary regretted so soon leaving Miss Dunstanville, and that she could not have the pleasure of her company in their morning's ramble. On which, Mrs. Dunstanville relented, and, to Eleanor's great joy, gave her permission to accompany them.

On their arrival, Mary presented Eleanor to Lady Rumbold and her uncle. There was a large party assembled; Edward, Talbot, Stockdale, and Mr. Belmont, the dean's eldest son.

Lady Rumbold was delighted to see Mary, and highly flattered at being visited so immediately on her arrival, by Lord Ardsallagh's family. Already she

felt adorned with a countess's coronet; her children as they were all well provided for, she hoped would not, although so numerous, be considered as obstacles. He had not seen them yet; she dreaded their introduction, and feared the mature appearance of the two eldest, would entirely change his feelings towards her.

Lord Ardsallagh proposed they should go, as it was a lovely day, on some pleasant excursion that would keep all the party together; every one seemed pleased with the idea. It was agreed they should drive to Glassnevin, and see the botanical gardens.

Listowel, leaving the ladies in Lord Ardsallagh's charge, went to apprize Lady Elizabeth of their intention, thinking it probable she would wish to join their party.

The carriages were ordered, and shortly after coming round, Lord Ardsallagh drove Lady Rumbold in his cur-

ricle; the two young ladies went in her barouche, with Mr. Stockdale and Mr. Belmont; Edward and Talbot went on the coach-box.

Young Belmont had for some time esteemed himself an admirer of Mary's; and had, in all companies, made her transcendent charms the subject of his conversation. He had not ventured yet to address her openly: his mother, whose darling he was, recommended his waiting, until he could flatter himself he had raised an interest in her bosom: "As you know, my dear," she observed, "nothing but the dread of seeing the *creature* die with love, would make them Listowels accept you, Watty, dear, for a son-in-law; with only your two thousand a year; and that not forthcoming until your father reposes with your grand-father. But you may personate the despairing lover. Let it appear, as *Car.* says in the *song*, that 'Concealment, like *the* worm in the

bud preys on your damask cheek;' but do not carry the simile further, 'patience on a monument' never won a fair lady. No, no! be *all fire and tow! flash and compliment!* It was thus your father won me, for all he is so quiet now, but did not hint a word of Hymen until I was head and ears in love with him. I wish, my dear Watty, you were as tall as your brother Robert, or that you were even five feet; you should, however, hold up your head better. Every one, my son, has some defect to battle against, a wise man shows his good sense by hiding that defect; the very knowledge of it proves him free from vanity; that he studies human nature, and understands the shades of difference between characters; and that characters are expressed by the outward forms no one will dispute: therefore, dear Watty, get invisible heels to your shoes, and affect lofty ideas, that she may at least say—he is a little man with a great soul! Do

not wear your hair combed so smooth, as that at once discovers how very thin it is; let me *frizzle* it up, which will apologize in a manner for the great size of your head:—if your cravat was better stuffed, your neck would look thicker. Look at Talbot and Stockdale, see what fashionable figures they have! Go to their tailor, he will make a man of you!"

Thus instructed, Belmont commenced his courtship, nothing doubting his power of pleasing; Robert encouraged him to persevere; not that he had any hope of his ultimately succeeding, but for the pleasure of tormenting Mary. However, he promised to give him every assistance, on which, from his increasing favour with Lady Elizabeth, Mrs. Belmont reckoned much; and agreed, that on the day young Belmont received Mary's fortune, he should pay one thousand pounds to his brother Robert.

Belmont sat opposite to Mary, and was preparing to be very agreeable. He began to relate an anecdote of himself;—but, death to his hopes!—she was too much engrossed by Stockdale to attend to him. Poor Belmont felt all his angry passions rise at Stockdale's good fortune: he knit his heavy brows, and sat sulkily watching for the first opportunity of obtruding in their conversation. They were now driving round the Phœnix Park, to show it to Miss Dunstanville. Stockdale was telling Mary of a wager that was decided there the last Spring: she listened with eager attention, and wondered at the prowess that could accomplish so difficult an undertaking. At her request, he repeated the circumstance to Miss Dunstanville, and told her of a gentleman's having laid a wager, that he would in one hour take up one hundred stones singly, each stone placed a yard distant from the other; that

he would commence at the hundredth stone, and return, as each stone was collected, to the point where the first was placed, and in the same progression until the required number were gathered.

"It must be very fatiguing," observed Eleanor "What space of ground was run over in performing this undertaking?"

"A distance of nearly ten thousand yards."

"I should suppose," observed Mary, "the distance was of little consequence, and that the principal difficulty of its completion consisted in the stooping posture required for the collecting of the stones."

"Did the gentleman win the wager with ease?" asked Eleanor.

"Oh, yes! with the greatest ease. I knew another gentleman who rode the ten thousand yards, dismounting from his horse to collect every stone."

"I do not see any thing so very wonderful in the performance," said the elder Belmont; "and although I never tried my powers in that way, I may venture to say, I could perform it with the greatest ease, either on foot or on horseback."

"You, Belmont! On horseback at least you would find some difficulty;" exclaimed Stockdale, sarcastically glancing at Mary; as they had been very lately diverted at his endeavours to mount a tall horse.

"Why not, sir?"—inquired Belmont, his face purple with rage:—"why not on horseback? You are, at least, the first person I ever heard assert that a horse impeded one's progress."

"I fancy the mounting and dismounting so often would occasion you to lose your distance, particularly off my tall horse, Roadster," said Stockdale. "However, if you are inclined to make trial of your prowess, I am willing to lay

fifty pounds, to your black poney, that you fail, either as an equestrian, or a pedestrian."

Belmont looked very much puzzled, and made no answer.

Mary, afraid of his refusing, said she should be delighted to see the trial made; observing, that if he refused to take up the bet, they could hardly suppose him sincere in asserting it might be performed with so much ease: then, as if supposing he could not now be off, they, with much affected gravity, described the different dresses proper to wear on such an occasion. Belmont listened to them in silence. At length, when they paused, he said—"I should have the greatest pleasure, ladies, in gratifying you, but it would be such a public thing—my name would be in the papers—and a description of my person; they would have me caricatured in all the print shops. In fact, making such an exhibition of my per-

son would not be fitting—would not be clerical."

"Clerical! You are not in orders!" exclaimed Stockdale.

"True; but my father is, and perhaps I may: indeed I am not determined."

"There is a great deal of sound sense in your objections," repliedMary. "The Phœnix Park is certainly too public a place for us private people to exhibit in; but my father's park will afford ground suited to your purpose. I am really happy in giving you this opportunity of winning Mr. Stockdale's money, which he deserves to lose, for giving you no credit, when so certain of succeeding."

"Truly, I have not been in the habit of stooping. I suppose the gentleman that won the wager rendered himself flexible by constant practice. I should be sorry to lose my poney, it is my favourite beast. I must consult Edward," who he saw was attending to

the conversation, and in consequence drove very slowly.

Edward laughed.—"I can only quote Lord Bacon for you, and recommend you not to make trial of your skill on a day when the south wind blows: for Bacon says—'Men's bodies are heavier and less disposed to motion when southern winds blow than when northern. The cause is, for that when the southern wind blows, the humours do (in some degree) melt and wax fluid, and so flow into the parts; as it is seen in wood, and in other bodies which, when the southern winds blow do swell.'"

"I do not understand your inference," returned Belmont, sulkily. "I suppose, sir, it is kindly meant; but to one of my slight make this quotation is unnecessary."

Edward now drove on; they soon arrived at the botanical gardens, where they met Lady Elizabeth and Robert

Belmont. Her ladyship was much amused when told of the bet, which Belmont had now accepted, to his brother's great annoyance. In vain he remonstrated, telling him how unequal he was to the undertaking; and that he would, either in the success or failure, hold himself and family up to ridicule

Belmont considered such language very impertinent from a younger brother; Lady Elizabeth, fearing words ran too high, silenced both parties by her approval of the bet, and said it should be decided on Friday, when she was to give a rustic dinner and dance on the green to her tenantry, at the bringing home of the harvest; and that the whole should conclude with a ball in the evening.

They strolled about the gardens for some time, and then returned in the same order as they came, Belmont still very much out of sorts with Mary, for paying him so little attention. At

length he meditated flirting with Miss Dunstanville, hoping, the love of admiration, and the love of power, which he believed inherent in the sex, would induce Mary to make some effort to retain him her slave.

They returned as the dressing-bell was ringing; Mary would not part with Miss Dunstanville; a servant was sent to the hotel for her clothes. They felt a mutual wish to know each other. The innocence and gaiety of Mary's manner attracted Eleanor, whilst Mary's anxiety for Villars' happiness, made her attach herself to Eleanor, and endeavour to gain her confidence. This feeling was heightened by its gratifying her pride—tending to prove to herself and friends, that Villars was just in judging of her sentiments towards him. Thus she reasoned; but still, in defiance of every effort to keep down the green-eyed monster, the bitter tears of disappointment would sometimes roll down her cheek, and convulsive sobs shake her frame. On

these occasions, she would deceive herself, by attributing her tears to despair at giving her friends reason to suppose her a disappointed, love-sick girl.

Whilst Miss Dunstanville waited for her clothes, she found amusement in looking over Mary's port-folio. She found some portraits taken in crayons:—Mr. Belmont's was the first she recognised.—She asked, in the greatest surprise, why he was so honoured.

Mary laughed.—"You may well be surprised. I took his picture as the very best specimen of a sour, ill-natured, discontented countenance—an odious egotist! who is born for no other purpose but to attend to his bodily wants;—his mind having—it is not illuminated with one single idea. Pray look further, and you will find more pleasing faces."

"Here is your brother's, and here is—Who!"—said Eleanor, starting—"dear Miss Listowel, say whose?"

"Mr. Villars—my brother's precep-

tor, a very strong likeness," said Mary; whilst she looked another way, that she might not seem to notice Eleanor's confusion.

After a long silence, during which Eleanor gazed mournfully at the picture, she said—"He is now, I believe, at the hotel with us: but are you sure his name is Villars?"

"I have known him," said Mary, "by that name since my childhood. He is an Englishman. Have you seen him, so as to judge of the likeness?"

"Yes, I had a distant view of him."

"I wish," said Mary, blushing deeply, "to ask you a question; which I fear you will think our short acquaintance does not authorise.—Don't fancy I find a confidant in every stranger.—May I depend on your candour, and ask you a question?"

Eleanor was as much agitated as Mary. She could not guess the purport of this inquiry; her curiosity was strongly excited; which, concealing as

much as possible, she replied—" I have never been found deficient in candour, —but—wherefore is it now to be put to the test ?" said Eleanor.

" Have you never," demanded Mary, " heard my name spoken of with— ?" said she, pointing to Villars' picture.

" Yes, I heard you were to be married to him."

Mary then related all that had occurred, omitting only, what Villars wished to have concealed.

Eleanor listened in silence, with earnest attention. At length, she expressed how much she was gratified by this proof of confidence ; and acknowledged, she was greatly interested for Villars, from his strong resemblance to a beloved relation, whom she had not seen for years. She was continuing, and Mary hoped she was leading to the point she so ardently wished, when the servant returned with Miss Dunstanville's things for dressing.

CHAPTER XV.

" And nature for a moment woke the thought,
And murmur'd, that from all domestic joys
Estrang'd, he wander'd o'er the world,
A lonely being, far from all he lov'd.
Son of Hodevah ! not among thy crimes
That murmur shall be written !"

In the course of the evening, Mary was much shocked on hearing from Edward, that Louisa was unwell. The intelligence came from Bryan, who had remained at Listowel Park with a sick horse, for some time after his master; and only arrived that morning in Dublin.

" What is to be done ?" inquired Mary.

" Talbot returns there to-morrow, for the purpose of seeing her. If you wish to write, you have no time to lose.—

You must send your letter this evening, as he departs to-morrow at the dawning of day."

She withdrew to a little writing-table, and hastily wrote a few lines to Louisa, expressive of her affection, and of the interest she excited in her and Edward. She next wrote to Villars, to inform him that Sybella was now expected every day, and to request, he would not sail, until he had made himself known to Eleanor. She then concluded, as she was impatient to send her notes before Robert Belmont came from the parlour, justly dreading his scrutinizing eye; as she found his observations had great weight with her uncle, in consequence of his intimacy with Lady Rumbold. She still more dreaded his newly-acquired influence with her mother, to her, strange as unaccountable. It was become equally so to Listowel; but, in his wife's present temper of mind, he dared not interfere.

On the return of the gentlemen, it was

arranged the same party were to take a cold dinner at Howth, to view the scenery there, and the works then carrying on to form the harbour; and from thence the whole party were to assemble at Lady Rumbold's.

They had a lovely day for their expedition. Some of the party were so adventurous as to descend in the diving bell. Eleanor wished Sybella of the party, as the effect it has on the head, is esteemed almost a certain cure for deafness. She attributed much of the fury of her temper, to her suspecting those around were giving vent to the angry feelings her conduct deserved.

Robert Belmont, as usual, drove Lady Elizabeth. Her coldness of manner to Listowel evidently increased. Her affection for her daughter seemed unabated; but she assumed more command; was entirely changed with respect to Stockdale; and peremptorily forbade her encouraging his addresses.

In this change Mary saw Robert Belmont's machinations; she felt very indignant, thinking her mother unreasonable in withdrawing her favour from Stockdale without alleging any reason. She had no idea of submitting to such treatment, and flirted with him more than ever; whilst the angry and sour looks of the Mr. Belmonts amused her. Walter, at times, would rally his spirits, and endeavour to flirt with Eleanor, who was more cheerful, as Talbot was away. She said to Mary—"Your Mr. Villars did not sail last night; I saw him this morning;" and added, blushing brightly, "I wish I could hear him speak!"

Mary regretted his not being of their party; and said, if he was detained a day or two longer she would hope to present him to her; but, added she, smiling—"Do not mention my intention to Robert Belmont."

The party did not return to Dublin

until a late hour. They went direct to Lady Rumbold's; where a messenger from the hotel followed the Dunstanvilles, to let them know Miss Sybella Dunstanville was arrived, and impatiently expecting to see them. This was a great disappointment to Mary; particularly as Eleanor could make no promise for the following day. Lady Elizabeth reminded her of their engagement on Friday to Holly Mount, and requested her cousin would accompany them, to witness Mr. Belmont's performance.

The next morning, Mary, whilst Lady Elizabeth was arranging some matters previous to their return to Holly Mount, drove to the Dunstanvilles. Villars handed her out of the carriage. She was startled at seeing him look so ill.—"Do not be alarmed," he said, much gratified by her affectionate manner; "I am better now, and glad of this opportunity of thanking you in person for the zealousness of your friendship. To see

you again was one of my motives for lingering here.—Twice, your notes have stopped me when all was arranged for my departure; and now, there was an arrival yesterday —"

"Which I hope will detain you a few days longer," said Mary.

"I believe so; but," returned Villars, "I must still remain *incog.*—now, doubly on my guard."

"Yes; but there is one person wishes to hear you speak, —"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Villars.

"To hear the sound of your voice;—I have promised you shall meet!"

"Not for worlds at present!—But we may be observed.—When I do go, it will be suddenly: perhaps we may meet no more!—God bless you! my dearest pupil!" said Villars, taking her hand. He kissed it tenderly; and with much emotion bade her farewell.—They had been standing in a little passage, leading to the anti-room of Mrs. Dun-

stanville's apartment, the door of which stood open.

Mary lingered a moment in the anti-room, to brush away an unbidden tear, caused by Villars' sorrow. She did not, however, think he had cause for desponding, considering his afflictions would terminate, when Talbot and Eleanor made known their intention of never being united.

On entering the drawing-room, she saw one of the loungers occupied by a female; who, on her approaching, slipped off the chair and stood up, exhibiting a little person, something in the form of the letter S. She drawled out in an affected squeaking voice:—"I suppose, madam, you are to wait on Mrs. Dunstanville; she and her daughter are up stairs.—Shall I ring the bell, and let them know you are here? Pray, madam, be seated," said the little person. Springing on a chair, she flapped down with a weight, considerable for

one so diminutive: it could only be accounted for by the height of the spring she was obliged to make to reach the chair. She was dressed in a blue silk, fancifully trimmed with pink satin ribbon, which tended to display, instead of conceal, the crookedness of her form. Her soot-coloured hair, rough and uncombed, was dressed up in large bows with knots of pink ribbon. Her head was of an enormous size, which made the dwarfishness of her figure strikingly apparent.

Mary could scarcely conceal her risibility at the ridiculous appearance of the person before her; but she was soon called to order by the penetrating glance of a small pair of grey eyes, which were fixed on her with an angry disdainful expression, as if she could read her thoughts. Mary felt alarmed; and sitting down according to her desire, said she should be happy to see Miss Dunstanville; but, that her visit was to Miss

Sybella Dunstanville; that she was sent by her mother, Lady Elizabeth Listowel, to request she would for the present wave the ceremony of a visit, and give her the pleasure of her company the next day at Holly Mount. At this address, the little person's features relaxed into a smile, which Mary thought, from the turning down of the corners of her mouth, made her look more hideous; it gave her even in her mirth a melancholy, crying air. Mary was again in danger of smiling; but the awful little grey eyes, that seemed to watch every turn of her countenance, again restrained her; and she listened with tolerable composure whilst Sybella announced herself, and said, she would be happy to wait on Lady Elizabeth, if sufficiently recovered from the fatigue of her journey.

To Mary's great relief, Eleanor now entered the room. They commenced a lively conversation, and were giving

Sybella sketches of the characters she would meet at Holly Mount. She listened most attentively, with her little penetrating eyes fixed on whoever spoke, the acuteness of her observation making amends for the deficiency of her hearing. She inquired particularly about Mr. Stock dale, whohad laid the bet; saying, she supposed he had more money than he knew what to do with, by his bribing his fellow creatures to make fools of themselves.

Mary reddened with indignation at this censure; but, feeling too conscious to speak, left his character to Eleanor.

Mr. Walter Belmont was next inquired for. Then Mary gave vent to her angry feelings:—"What a figure he will be in his dress! It occupies all his thoughts, poor little man!—He reminds me of M'Leod's description of the Brazil men; when he says, they are *grim looking, squalid, and hysterical!*"

"Hysterical! Yes, he does look sickly," returned Eleanor; "but he

cannot help that; you might rather add, *satirical*."

"He wishes,—he intends at least to be so; but he has not wit," observed Mary. "Those he wishes to tear he may leave to his brother Robert, who is equally malicious, but has more sting, more point, and more design. You smile!"

"Yes;" replied Eleanor, "for so very innocent and gay a personage, you are quick-sighted and sharp in your observations!—I shall grow afraid of you."

"Do not say so, my dear friend! Believe me that is one reason why I love you as it were intuitively. I am sharp and quick-sighted to see your many perfections; and, may I add, have sense enough to value your friendship."

Eleanor embraced her, and expressed herself highly flattered by her good opinion.

Mary now took leave, as she was in haste to return to her mother.

CHAPTER XVI.

" Gaiety is the true medicine for the studious; the mind and heart should be dilated when it has been contracted by obstinate toil. Blossoming is as necessary to the human mind as to trees, to make it recover its verdure and flourish; but there are people, like rose trees without flowers, who present nothing to your view but bark and prickles. When I meet such I do not speak a word, but pass by as quick as I possibly can, for fear of being stung."

On the day appointed, at one o'clock, the company were assembled to see the wager decided. Mrs. Belmont and her daughters were there; they came express, —invited, she said, by her son, to witness his triumph. But, in fact, she hastened from Sea View, with the hope of inducing him to give up the wager; thinking, he would cut but a sorry figure in the eyes of his mistress, as a feeble, discomfited knight. In vain she remon-

strated; he would not be dissuaded, and was at length highly nettled, on her continuing to urge such mortifying truths. She was, therefore, to restore him to temper, obliged to assist her daughters in completing his dress; it was a light blue jacket, faced with rose colour, and a rose coloured bonnet, with three blue feathers. He thought those gay colours would lighten the sallowness of his complexion, and give him a more juvenile appearance.

The field of action being chosen, and marked; Jackson, Lady Elizabeth's footman, placed the stones.

Walter Belmont now stepped forth: eagerness, perturbation, and anxiety strongly depicted in his countenance; and having arrived at the hundreth stone, picked it up, to the surprise of the company, with the greatest ease: for, from the highly stuffed and stiff appearance of his dress, they deemed his bending forward next to impossible.

Mary could have let them into the secret: she had been amused, whilst dressing, with Mrs. Tippet's account of Master Walter, as he was still stiled in the steward's room. She said, he had been practising all the morning; and had great work with Mr. Setstitch, the tailor, altering his new suit, that he might stoop with ease. This perfection he certainly attained; but, alas! celerity was as requisite as pliability; and by the time he had deposited eighty-three stones at Mary's feet, the hour was out, and he must resign all hopes of the fifty pounds, and of the myrtle wreath Mary had promised to adorn his brows with, if victor; but worse than all, lose, for ever the services of his little black pony, and be doomed to mount many a tall horse, before he could meet with such another gentle little animal.

He sunk languidly on a bench near his mother, overcome by fatigue and disappointment. The exertions he had

made might have proved a stronger man, and, probably, he would have won the prize, but for the fatigue of the morning's practice.

Mary pitied him, and conquering her habitual dislike, tried to console him.

He lamented not receiving the myrtle wreath from her fair hands as his heaviest misfortune; on which, she proposed, that if he succeeded in writing a poem, descriptive of his grief, and of the amusements of the day, the wreath should still be his.

"Is it possible! Have I then still a chance of being so blessed, and of having my poor noddle ornamented by your fair hand?"

"Certainly," said Mary, losing her patience with his returning spirits, "if it be furnished with one bright idea."

"If being possessed with the idea of your excellence will entitle me, I may still have hopes."

She left him, having set him a task,

as far beyond his intellect as the stooping was beyond his strength. He had never written a verse in his life. Poetry had for him no magic; and, but for the reviewers, he would have been as ignorant as he was indifferent, of all that was written.

It occurred to him that Villars might assist him in this dilemma; he was fully competent; but, the question was, could he now apply to him, having never paid him any attention since he left the Listowels: had they met, he should have looked on him as a person out of place, and perhaps have evinced his contempt. But, now that he required his assistance, he would have been all obsequiousness. His father thought him a fine scholar; he remembered, likewise, how he had often assisted him in replying to letters of business; and in writing a *billet-doux* to a lady of the first fashion and fortune in the kingdom: but, whether it was that Villars did not pen the letter suffi-

ciently tender, or, that the lady had an adamantine heart, remains unknown: certain it is, she sent him a refusal, and talked to all her friends of little Mr. Belmont's presumption, in supposing she would accept of him.

Notwithstanding this failure, our little hero was fully bent on again applying to this pen of a ready writer, as he facetiously called him; and expected he would indite for him such a poem as would win the prize. He, accordingly, wrote him a few lines; saying, he requested his advice and assistance in a matter of the greatest moment; that the least delay would render his services unprofitable; and, that if he objected to coming to Holly Mount, he would meet him at the inn in the village. He despatched his servant with this note, on his father's fleetest horse.

Meanwhile, the company could scarcely, before the Belmonts, restrain their risibility at Mary's pigmy champion, as

he was called: Robert Belmont, although inclined to indulge in satire, even at his brother's expense, tried to restrain their mirth; and to interest Lady Elizabeth in his favour.

His influence with her was rapidly increasing; and his attentions were every day becoming more necessary. She no longer considered him as a wild, inexperienced youth, who must must be tolerated for his family's sake; but, on the contrary, admired him as a fine-spirited young man, capable of strong attachment, and interested for her happiness, as he would be for a favourite sister's. She thought, however, he did Mr. Listowel injustice, and that her supposed wrongs had raised his indignation in an unreasonable manner. It pained her that Belmont should have such an idea; she therefore took every opportunity of shewing him his error. He would, on those occasions, regard her with an eye of pity, and affect such an

air of mystery as made her shudder. When she pressed for an explanation, he would sigh, and tell her ignorance was bliss; and that he would not, for worlds, be such a demon as to interrupt her happiness.

Still, her husband's manners were so frank, so affectionate, that she could not, when in his company, entertain a doubt; and would reproach herself for having so credulously listened to Robert Belmont; determining, on the very next opportunity to tell him so. This idea, or else curiosity, to hear some of his mysteries unravelled, induced her constantly to allow him more of her company: his extreme youth, and having known him from a child, led her to treat him without the smallest reserve.

Listowel, likewise, treated him as one of the family; and, until very lately, thought himself too happy, when engaged by business, in having him to escort Lady Elizabeth. Robert had

made many attempts to prejudice him against Villars, but without success; the more he saw of that excellent person, the more he considered him worthy of his confidence; and was now fully convinced he never sought Mary's love, and that his conduct towards her was truly parental. It had long been Listowel's wish to give his daughter to Stockdale; he considered their characters would coalesce particularly well; as he was young, and had spirits equal to her own; with great strength of mind, and gentleness of disposition, that would lead him to curb, with tenderness, the giddiness of her character. He hoped, through Villars' influence, to prevail on Mary to accept of Stockdale; and had written to him to say, he requested he would dine with him that day, as he required his advice and assistance in an affair he had very much at heart; it did not occur to him to mention the Dunstanvilles or

Belmonts being there: not supposing he had any objection to mix, as formerly, in company.

Villars was anxious to comply with his patron's request; and the readier to do so, as it had been given out, the day before, in the hotel, that the Dunstanvilles were gone on a visit to Lord Ellismore's, within eight miles of Holly Mount; he apprehended, from the intimacy of the family, there might be a possibility of their dining there; and, consequently, resolved to attend his patron's summons early in the day, that he might have it in his power to retreat if necessary.

CHAPTER XVII.

" Sleep hath its own world,
And a wide realm of wild reality;
And dreams in their development have breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy!"

Mary now led the juvenile part of the company to see the tenantry (who had been employed in bringing home the harvest) at dinner: to which they had all hastened, when the fun of seeing Master Watty collecting the stones, was over.

" They,
" In fair array, each by the lass he loves;"

and

" While thro' their cheerful band the rural talk,
" The rural scandal, and the rural jest
" Fly harmless,"

Mary and her friends stood at a little distance, witnessing their happiness, and diverted by their remarks. One said,—"Upon my credit, I *thinks* it mighty *quare* sport, collecting *them same lumps* of stones!" Another wondered "one of his blood, and a *ganius* of his kind, would be *after* such low tricks:—he had not, to be sure, far to stoop; but for such a *mighty slight little* man, it was a *venturesome* attempt!" They next inquired who the little lady lady was? and bet a wager, that she had shiners to fill the trunk on her back. Mary, in a moment, understanding their allusion, hurried off the Dunstanvilles, on pretence of seeking Lady Elizabeth: they found her in the garden; when Mary, preferring a wood walk, strolled about the grounds with Eleanor and Stockdale. After rambling about a considerable time, they sat down on a rustic seat.

Stockdale was giving them a ludicrous

account of young Belmont's endeavours to gain the prize; observing, he was fortunate, at least, in having his fate decided: "for," said he, "whilst it was in agitation he thought of nothing else; it even haunted his dreams."

"Yes," returned Eleanor, "and he made an observation, that, whenever he dreamed of any passing occurrence, it became from that time a leading feature in his life. He says he is not superstitious; but that his mother augurs well from the turn his dreams take. She flatters him, that if he gain the myrtle wreath from your fair hand, he may have hopes of placing on your delicate finger the marriage ring!"

"Insufferable puppy!" exclaimed Stockdale.

"His vanity," replied Eleanor, "encourages the delusion: weak minds are ever prone to superstition.—It is wonderful and unaccountable how ideas occur in our dreams, that have in no

wise been the subject of our waking thoughts!

"Our life is twofold; sleep hath its own world."

"I have no dreams," rejoined Mary, "that would lead me to one serious reflection; but, my governess, and many of sage experience, have recounted dreams that made me shudder, they appeared so awfully mysterious. What do the literati say?—Do they allow dreams can be excited by cabalistical charms?—Has there any thing been written on the subject?"

"Yes," returned Stockdale, "the learned and the ingenious have given the subject their attention. The learned Bichat, in his work on Phisiology, says, 'Dreams are nothing more than a portion of animal life, escaped from the torpor in which the other portion of it is plunged."

"That," replied Eleanor, "is nearly similar to what Carmichael, in his inge-

nious Essay on Dreams, says; that, 'when some of the mental organs are awake, and all the senses are asleep; then dreams occur, and seem to be realities.'"

"That, certainly," observed Mary, "accounts for our being liable to dreaming, but does not throw any light on the reason, why fancy should present such and such pictures to our imagination."

"Professor Stewart maintains," said Stockdale, "that all our mental operations, which are independent of our will, may continue during sleep; and that the phenomena of dreaming may, perhaps, be produced by these, diversified in their apparent effects, in consequence of the suspension of our voluntary powers. That the same laws of association which regulate the train of our thoughts while we are awake, continue to operate during sleep; but the influence of the will being suspended,

all our voluntary operations, such as recollection, reasoning, &c. must also be suspended."

"I think," replied Eleanor, "if we allow fancy is at liberty, we cannot wonder much at her extraordinary flights. For instance, even when awake, are we not often surprised how one idea leads to another? Sometimes the concatenation of ideas is passing strange; and we are led on to circumstances far-fetched, and almost forgotten, when we cannot even account for that train of thought occurring."

"And yet," observed Stockdale, "how much wilder must this concatenation be in our dreams; when perhaps in its commencement some of our faculties were suspended by sleep; and, on waking, we retain only those circumstances that are most striking; one leading to another without our being able to charge our memories with the why or the wherefore. Carmichael,"

continued Stockdale, " says, that when some of the mental organs are asleep and two or more senses awake, that we can attend to external impressions, and notice the gradual departure of our slumbers, a state in which we consider ourselves neither awake nor asleep."

" Ah! that is the happy time when, as Pope says:

" Her guardian sylph prolong'd the balmy rest:
'Twas he had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning dream that hovered o'er her head."

And then," added Mary,

" Seem'd to her ear his willing lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say."

" I wish I could for one hour take the post of your guardian sylph, and make you dream of time flying happily at Drummore!" said Stockdale, hesitatingly, in an under voice, as if afraid of giving offence. Mary blushed, but did not look displeased.

After a moment's pause, she replied —"That indeed would be a flight of fancy.—I have somewhere read, that the spirits of the blessed are allowed to hover over, and guard their favourites on earth: how delightful when, uncertain how to act, to have it pointed out in a dream, and to receive instruction, that we could suppose was the breathing of a spirit!"

"That shows, my dear friend!" returned Stockdale, looking at her with the tenderest affection, "your wish to be set in the right path, and when once put in that, to pursue it steadily: and although," added he, smiling, "I may not, by dying, fulfil your wishes, yet, if you will accept of an ardent spirit, clothed in mortal form, I will promise to be a most faithful one, and to assist you in all your dilemmas. Consult me as if I were indeed your guardian spirit!"

Mary blushed brightly.—"I did not mean to say I had any present occa-

sion for such services. But," added she, looking down, "it has not been always the case. My guardian must be a sylph or spirit, as he would require greater powers than men generally have; for he must read my heart, and by his art discover when I want his counsel. I fear, if like mortals, he should wait for me to apply—he could serve me little; for, alas! the time of action with me is always over before I am aware of being at a loss."

"I think," replied Stockdale, "if you would allow me the privilege you would grant this guardian spirit, of saying to you every thing I thought necessary, I might, perhaps, without the gift of divination, discover when you required my aid, and tell you, in the sincerity of my heart, what would make most for your happiness.—Will you accept my offer?"

"I will—on the same terms I should my sylph's:—which is, to listen to all

you have to say—to bear even the caustic of your observations: but, at the same time," she said, smiling archly, "to do as I pleased, and in no measure give up my inclination, further than you make it my pleasure."

"I do not desire more," replied her lover, his countenance glowing with hope; "and am most grateful to you for this permission."

CHAPTER XVIII.

" Canst thou forget the silent tears
Which I have shed for thee ?
And all the pangs, and doubts, and fears,
Which scatter'd o'er my bloom of years
The blights of misery ?"

Whilst Mary and Stockdale were thus conversing, Eleanor left them, and strolled about, admiring the beauty of the scenery. The day was bright and balmy; all nature seemed gay and cheerful; the rich diversity of the scene charmed Eleanor; her bonnet was thrown back to catch the soft breeze; and seeing, on the summit of a rising ground, a rude unfinished building, she hastened towards it, with the intention of sketching from thence the richest point of view of the landscape.

She had not been long thus engaged, when from the side of the building that faced the Dublin road, she heard the sound of footsteps: as they approached nearer she heard voices, and thought she could distinguish Mr. Walter Belmont's.

As she did not choose to be interrupted, she withdrew from the window to an arched door-way, standing back until the persons should pass on; and as this was gala day at Holly Mount, supposed they were company from Dublin to join their festivities. She now heard Mr. Walter Belmont's voice in eager argument; and on their coming nearer, she heard him say—"My dear friend, all depends on you, I have been watching for you these two hours. If you will but write the verses for me, Mary, the lovely Mary, will be mine! She nearly told me so: saying, she only wanted a fair opportunity to reward my services; and desired I might distinguish myself in some way."

"But are you not aware"—replied a voice, that went direct to Eleanor's heart, thrilled through her frame, and to which she listened with a breathless attention—"that your passing off lines, written by another as your own, is practising a very unpardonable deception?"

"Deception? my friend; merely *une ruse de guerre!*—in love and war, all stratagems are allowable!—Your conscience need not smite you; I will make just as good a husband, as if I could string rhymes!—That is a talent not necessary to our domestic happiness."

"I should be happy to oblige you; but I confess I have some doubts as to whether I shall proceed further, since you tell me the company are so numerous."

"Do you not know Mr. Listowel has business with you?—He told me he anxiously awaited your arrival."

"I will hear what he has to say, and then return."

"No, no; you shall not go to the house until you have written the poem. See, here is a pencil and paper; take them into that old building, where you will find a rustic table and chair. Whilst you are writing the poem I will seek Mr. Listowel, bring him to you, and you will then be at liberty to return to Dublin. Remember, do not mention the poem to any person; you may hand it to me without making any observation."

"I suppose six lines will answer," said Villars, taking the pencil and paper.

"Oh! yes; provided there is point in them—let there be sting. Stockdale must wince! But, remember, I will have no fighting!—No, no!—existence is now too precious! Here, go in; I will shut the door that you may have no interruption!"

Belmont then pushed him in; closing with a great crash a heavy worm-eaten door, which a broken hinge rendered very unwieldy.

Eleanor remained all this time in extreme agitation. Was he, indeed, her cousin!—Could he be Charles Dunstanville!—He, whom she was taught for so many years to consider as numbered with the dead! or, at least, to think his existence very doubtful. 'Why,' thought she, 'did he conceal himself from me, when he knew my happiness was so wrapped in his?—Why forsake me?—Can he be Mary's Villars?'

The rapidity of thought, her wonder, her joy, at finding her much-loved cousin still in the land of the living, nearly deprived her of animation: she was leaning against the arch-way for support, as Belmont closed the door on Villars, who was carelessly viewing the rude structure of the building, when his eyes rested on Eleanor. He gazed in wonder: for so motionless was her figure —so devoid of life did she appear, that, but for her drapery, he might have fancied she was a statue placed there.

Their eyes met—all her doubts were removed. She gave a heavy sigh, and exclaimed—"My cousin! Charles Dunstanville!"—Overcome with joy, she would have fallen; but that Dunstanville, as we must henceforth call him, hastened forward, and caught her in his arms.

"Can this be possible!—Am I once more permitted to behold my lovely cousin!—To fold her in my arms, and to press her to this faithful heart that beats only for her!"

They gazed at each other in silent wonder, as if they could not believe their bliss real.

"Alas!" exclaimed Eleanor, "what sweet delusion captivates my senses!—Are you indeed my cousin? my own Charles?—Why did you deceive me; fly from me; and raise a feigned story of your death? At the very time too, when my mother and the Fates seemed willing to reward our long tried attachment!

Say, how am I to account for all this?"

"Your words are unintelligible!—What can my Eleanor mean?—I fled from my family—my prospects in life, because, persuaded by your mother and Sybella that my doing so was necessary to your happiness; and that I must either do so, or marry Sybella. Could I hesitate?—Could any one, impressed with your image, wed deformity?—charmed by your gentleness—your sweetness of temper—take for his helpmate ill nature and malice—I may at once say—all the ill passions pent up in one small figure?"

"Is it possible! Is she so very false? But, my mother—my dear mother!—Surely she could not deceive me?"

"Your mother is a most amiable woman! But, alas! I fear this imp has too much influence over her."

"How! in what instance?—Oh, tell me!—Does she know you are alive?"

"She has no reason to think me otherwise."

"Why did you leave me?—And why did cruel Sybella, whom I never even in thought injured, plot so unmercifully against my happiness!"

"Alas! my friend! I see you are quite in the dark.—May I not," said he, looking at her with the most ardent affection, "form the brightest hopes from their thinking it necessary to keep you in such ignorance respecting me? Knowing your faith and confidence in my love, no circumstance short of my death, they supposed, could induce you to listen to another, however rich the lover!—Did they in any way asperse my character?"

"You were too general a favourite for that measure. When I was ill, in consequence of your duel with my poor cousin, I felt confident he forced you to it.—Still I knew your trepidation of mind must be extreme; and that, although poor Ramsey was recovering

fast, still I knew you could not easily silence your self-reproaches; and that on reflection you would consider no provocation should have induced you, to lift your hand with the intent to take a man's life!"

"Yes, my Eleanor! my sufferings were great, and, I humbly hope, expiated my crime! My love you can never feel the torture of acting against the strong conviction of right, which religion early implants in the Christian's mind. But no more of my remorse; my crime brought its own punishment, by placing me completely in Sybella's power!"

"Tell me all! but oh! do not rashly accuse my mother!"

"I will tell you simply the circumstances; we will then draw our conclusions, as much in her favour as possible."

Dunstanville was perplexed; the death-like paleness of Eleanor's countenance alarmed him: he knew she dreaded to discover that her mother had betrayed

her, and joined in machinations with her bitter enemy, and would now have concealed Mrs. Dunstanville's duplicity; but, that he conceived it was necessary for their happiness that she should know all.

Eleanor's suspense was every moment becoming more painful. She again urged him to proceed; and, whilst she listened with eager attention, he related what will be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

" Dim backward as I cast my view,
What sickening scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me through,
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom,
My woes here, shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb."

" After the unfortunate rencontre I had with Ramsey, I retired to my lodging, overwhelmed with despair; I had no fears for his life, from what I saw, and from what the surgeon told me on examining the wound. I did not leave him until that point was ascertained: still, that I should have lifted my hand against a fellow creature—against your cousin, distracted me!—Besides, his generous conduct towards me, his anxiety to con-

vince those about him, that he was the aggressor; and his almost begging my forgiveness for forcing me to such a measure; all, all, caused me the bitterest self reproach I ever in my life experienced: to think how near I was destroying so valuable a member of society! I should have endured all his taunts, considering love and jealousy had inflamed steadier spirits than his."

"He ever did you justice, and in his last moments tried to promote our happiness!"

"Generous Ramsey!——You may judge I passed a miserable night; my servant returned at eight o'clock from his lodgings, with a favourable account: he had passed a good night, the doctors had not then seen him.

"In about two hours I received a note from Sybella; I was amazed, as we were not on terms that could lead me to expect such an attention. It was most artfully penned, and at the time

most completely deceived me; these, as well as I can remember were the words:"

"At a time like the present, when I "know your mind to be dreadfully agi- "tated,—it is the part of your cousin and "sincere, friend to lay aside all resent- "ments, all remembrances of past quar- "rels; and to prove to you, how strongly "I have your interest at heart.—I must, "therefore, although with unfeigned "regret, impart to you, that the phy- "sicians have but a poor opinion of "Ramsey: the unfavourable change "took place yesterday; and from that "moment my maid acted as head nurse, "in order to deceive the world with "favourable accounts of his doing well. "The surgeon, who is my particular "friend, contrives to evade all questions; "which, he can easily continue to do, "until you leave this country. Fly, "my dearest Charles! Here you are "no longer safe;—let not the want of "money,—let nothing stop you,—my "purse will answer you, until the danger

" is over.—Write a line by the bearer, " to let me know the hour you depart; " that I may, if possible, see you for a " moment!"

" This letter threw me into a state of horror; I considered my fairest hopes blasted, and that I should have hereafter to walk the earth as a murderer. I wrote her a few lines, grateful for the interest she took in me, but determined to remain at my lodgings, and await poor Ramsey's fate.

" In the dusk of the evening a lady came muffled up, in a chair to my lodgings. It was Sybella! She came to tell me further of Ramsey's danger, and to urge my instant departure. I was obstinate, and said, that if the dreadful event of his death took place, in consequence of any injury received from me, that I should stand my trial, and prove, at least, the action was free from malice and unpremeditated. She left me after an hour, and was pale with rage at my obstinacy.

"In the mean time, I went regularly, morning and evening, to inquire for Ramsey. The answers were always favourable.

"Sybella returned again the next evening, bringing me a letter from your mother, requesting I would fly. She repeated all her niece's arguments, and added, that if I could not be persuaded from motives of my own safety, that surely, when I knew Ramsey's only chance for recovery was my going,—nothing should, nothing could, detain me. She said, he inquired for me constantly; that I was never for a moment out of his thoughts; he feared I was taking advantage of his illness to carry off his cousin; and that the surgeon gave it as his opinion, that all depended on his mind being kept perfectly easy."

"Is it possible! Did my mother write that letter? Was it, indeed, her hand writing?" inquired Eleanor.

"It was indeed, of which there can

be no doubt, as you shall hear. This letter staggered me very much.—I almost suspected the whole a contrivance to banish me.—I knew how fertile Sybella's imagination was, and that when I was absent, they would fancy themselves equal to persuade you into any measure; I therefore hesitated, and said, I could not at once decide. Sybella, very much dissatisfied, left me, after having paid a long visit; and said, she would call early the next morning to know my determination. I begged she would not, and hinted that her character might suffer. She smiled, I thought, with a malicious expression; and said, no self consideration should prevent her serving me.—As soon as she was gone, I went to the surgeon, I believe for the hundredth time, and never, until then, was so fortunate as to find him at home: his name, you know, was Deveaux; he was almost a perfect stranger to me. He seemed confused at my en-

trance. On my questioning him with regard to Ramsey, he coloured deeply, and appeared very much annoyed, giving confused answers. Quickly recovering himself, he said—'I recommend you, by all means, Mr. Dunstanville, to return to England; Mr. Ramsey may do well; but there is no answering for wounds in this hot weather.'

"Why not call in another surgeon, if you think your patient's case so doubtful?

"He replied, with a conceited air, the family were satisfied with his skill.

"I quitted him, resolving to be guided by you; knowing that, unless there was an absolute necessity, you would not banish me your presence.

"Accordingly, the next morning I told Sybella my determination; and was shocked at seeing repressed fury in her wicked little countenance. She was silent for a moment; then, sighing deeply, said, with an hypocritical air, she was

sorry nothing could soften my nature, or induce me to be guided by my friends, who were, with the tenderest care, guarding my feelings; and trying, in this momentous period of my life, to save me every anxiety;—but all would not do—they must draw aside the veil, and tell me the worst. 'In the first instance, Charles, I charge you, on your peril, not to be seen in the street; nor, on any account, to leave your lodging, except to depart from this city.'

"I stared with amazement, and felt a shuddering I could not account for at her haughty mandate. I desired she would explain herself, and remember, I was no longer a school-boy!

"'Well, go,' said the fiend, 'show yourself in the streets; call on Eleanor at Ramsay's lodgings, where she is with her mother; and finish the work you have so happily begun!'

"For pity's sake explain, why is she there?

"'Alas!' she said, with a mournful air, 'must I, then, be the person?—I, who would count my life but a small matter in your service?—Must I be hated by you, for telling you Ramsey only lives under the idea that you have left this place?—Eleanor has promised to atone for your impetuosity, by giving him her hand: this promise was balm to his mind; and was given, on condition that they left you at liberty; and that, even if Ramsey did die of his wounds, you were not to be molested.'"

"Oh!" exclaimed Eleanor (wiping away the pearly drops from her eyes), "What artifice!"

"You, my Eleanor, who know my heart, may judge what I suffered;—there was a dreadful air of probability in her story, I could not doubt.—I pictured you, my friend! sacrificed for your fears for my safety, to one, in character, in talents, every way your inferior. The path of duty, which I knew you would

always tread, would no longer for you be strewed with flowers.—Oh, my love! in that hour of distraction I thought not of myself, your misery engrossed every idea! I well knew your cousin's turn of mind; and that a cold, heartless hand, would never satisfy the egotism of his character:—and that, even were I to die, he would still be jealous of the regard you would show my memory. These were after reflections; for, on first hearing the fatal news, animal life was suspended; I fell down in a swoon. On my senses returning, which was not for some hours, I found myself lying on a sofa, your mother, Sybella, and Deveaux attending me."

"My mother! Blessings on her," cried Eleanor, her countenance brightening; "Did she not undeceive you?"

"Alas, no! She deprived me of every hope.—A low fever was the consequence,—for three weeks my life was despaired of;—during which time, Sy-

bella attended me with the affection and tenderness of a sister. Was it not wonderful, how she could command her temper for such a length of time? I certainly felt softened towards her, and lamented, since I had no chance of happiness in the wedded life, that I could not comply with her's and my uncle's wish. I almost believe, when recovering, after having been confined two months, she would have worked on my gratitude, but for a circumstance I must ever regard as most fortunate.—It was you, my Eleanor!—your little image saved me. I was able to sit up; and was, almost for the first time, since my illness, left to myself: I moved my weak frame to my writing-desk, at the other end of the room, and taking out your picture, was so engrossed by that dear object, as not to hear the fiend enter my chamber. She approached with noiseless step, and on beholding your picture, with violence dashed it from

my hand; and with a countenance influenced with fury, asked me, if it were thus I showed my gratitude to her, for saving me from the jaws of death, thus to devote all my private hours to the picture of another man's wife?

"Wife!" I exclaimed, is she then married?"

"'Yes!' replied she: 'the secret, which in tenderness I kept from you, now passion has extorted.'

"I heard no more, a sudden faintness came over me, I fell on the ground;—this brought on a relapse;—again I was despaired of, and again Sybella, by her care and attention restored me to life. But she no longer met a grateful heart; I looked upon her with horror, receiving every thing from her hand with disgust."

"My dear Charles! what must you have suffered!—whilst I was taught to consider you as the strangest of mortals. My mother consented to our union; I

wrote to acquaint you of it; no answer was vouchsafed me; for months I expected an answer. At length, I was told that you fled after the duel, and were never since heard of!"

"Did you believe such a story?"

"I could not; but what could I say, when your absence gave it such a colour of probability?"

"On my second recovery, my uncle wrote to me, saying, he expected I would immediately marry his daughter, or never more consider myself as his nephew. To plead averseness now to the match, he said, would be ridiculous; as Sybella, before my illness, was seen coming out of my lodgings at all hours; and that, for the last three months she had devoted herself to me, at the risk of health and reputation; that when wedded to her I should be doubly dear to him; and that he had always looked upon me as his son, and his heir. But, on the contrary, if I were so

headstrong as to refuse this offer, I should for ever lose his love; be banished from his presence; and that he would pray we might never meet, lest he should be tempted to lift his hand against his brother's son!

"This letter shocked me very much. I loved my uncle, and knew what his intentions towards me always were:—to make me his heir, without burthening the patrimonial inheritance with Sybella; always considering the disparity in our years as too great; and, but for her artful misrepresentations, the idea of a match so preposterous would never have occurred to him. To offend him was dreadful; but I had no choice; as I would sooner have embraced death than have wedded his daughter. I was, however, determined never more to offend him by my presence; and to leave a country where I should be continually in dread of seeing you, or of hearing your name mentioned. I therefore

made my preparations; and, before the hateful Sybella could pay me another visit, left the kingdom; first writing to my dear uncle, telling him, how much I regretted the loss of his favour: I requested he would suspend his judgment, and not utterly cast from his heart his beloved brother's son.—His affection I said was all I coveted, as I always considered my cousin his natural heir. I then told him I was leaving the kingdom, to try if change of climate would not restore my peace of mind.

"Early the next morning I begun my journey: my spirits were dreadfully depressed at leaving ——. Beloved place! where I had experienced such extremes of happiness and misery! I crossed at ———, from whence I made a melancholy journey through England, avoiding all the great towns, and retiring from observation as much as possible. At Milford I crossed the Channel, as I was acquainted with Mr. Berry, who lived,

with his family, near Waterford. He was under some obligations to my father, had professed much regard for me, which encouraged me now to rely on his friendship.—I could not but feel a melancholy pleasure in having escaped from every thing that could agitate or touch me; —the impression of past scenes were not weaker; but still, I was insensibly engrossed by the passing occurrences. I had now to solicit the advice, I may say, the protection, of a person that I had not seen for years. I was then too young to judge of characters. I was to depend on his honour and prudence for concealing me from my friends; and yet, could not recount to him the events which had reduced me to make such a singular appeal; but, with that air of calmness so necessary to give a communication due weight, I was to explain, in part, my reasons for leaving my friends.

"I had not to repent my application to Mr. Berry; his family were very

pleasing, and all seemed anxious to dissipate the melancholy they saw I was a prey to; and yet, I suppressed my feelings, and endeavoured to conceal an agitated heart under an appearance of tranquillity.

"They did not torment me with impertinent curiosity.—It sufficed to tell them, that, for family reasons, unattended by disgrace, I was obliged to conceal myself from my nearest relatives. That I had consequently dropt my sirname, and adopted that of my mother, which, as my baptismal name, I had a right to; I next explained to Mr. Berry, that during this concealment from my friends, I had no income, and had for my present support but a few hundreds in the funds; but I hoped, as I had received a good classical education, he could procure me some appointment or place, by the profits of which I could maintain myself.

"He promised me his interest, and

was extremely dejected, that his friend's son should be in so deplorable a situation. The re-establishment of my health, was, however, his first object; he proposed I should accompany them to Killarney, hoping the variety and beauty of the scenery there, would engage my attention, and weaken the impression of my misfortunes. Grateful for their attention, I accepted the offer; and exerted myself not to prove a damp to their cheerful society. The struggle was of service to me. I became every day more composed. I could not prevail on myself to inquire about you, or any of the family.—Forgive the selfishness of my nature!—I knew I could not endure to hear you were happy,—for then, as Ramsey's wife, you must have forgotten me!—and, on the other hand, to hear you were unhappy, would have made me miserable!"

Eleanor, smiling, said—"My dear Charles! you were as bad as Julia's Falkland."

"Not so bad; whilst you were my betrothed love, I never doubted you. On my return from Killarney, those good people sent me to their son, Doctor Berry, one of the most eminent physicians in Dublin; I found him as warmly my friend as his father.—He wished to recommend me to Mr. Listowel, but hesitated; not thinking himself justified whilst my story was unknown to him. Guessing the cause of his hesitation, and charmed with the delicacy of his conduct and the justness of his principles, I placed in him unbounded confidence; telling him, at the same time, never to mention the subject again.

"He now——

"I hear some one coming. You are called. O! where shall I go to?"

"It is my torment, Walter Belmont."

"Pray meet him; do not let him find me here."

Dunstanville went to the door.

"Well, where are my verses? I gave

you time to write an epic poem; and came on before Mr. Listowel, that you might give me the lines, and explain to me any words of your cramp writing.—Quickly, my dear friend! we have not a moment—"

"Forgive me, I have not written a word; tell me what you wish to say, and I will now assist you."

"Where is the paper and the pencil? I suppose you left them in the building; I will run for them!"

"No, no, let me go!" exclaimed Dunstanville. He was too late.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Go to her now—be bold of cheer,
Whilst her soul floats 'twixt hope and fear:
It is the very change of tide
When best the female heart is tried.

ROKEBY.

BELMONT entered the building, and was startled on seeing Eleanor.—"Oh! oh! and so the cat is out of the bag!—Poor thing! let it not look so frightened. Hah! hah! hah! a good thing! To shut up a man so admired by the ladies as Mr. Villars, in an old building with a fine girl, and then expect him to write a copy of verses on my love!—I'faith its a good one!—Well, my pretty one, reward me, if you do not choose I should tell tales; bribe me to silence by assisting to write my lines."

"We take you at your word," said Villars; "although, believe me, we have to thank you for the interview! It is some years since we met."

"Well, leave us together; Mr. Listowel is seeking you. I'll warrant she is as clever at rhymes as you are!"

Dunstanville met Listowel at the door, who held out his hand, and received him most cordially. "I am sorry to hear, my dear friend, you cannot join our party this evening; so many years accustomed to your society, I feel the want of it sadly."

"I am highly flattered at what you say. It shows," said Villars, "our late misunderstanding left no ill impression on your mind, and that you have fully done me justice."

"You have been too long established in my heart," returned Listowel: "and I feel too grateful to you for my son's attainments ever to consider you in any other light than as a faithful friend of

my family.—Poor Mary! you behaved most honourably by her.—Am I right in presuming that your resignation of her did not cost a struggle, and that you ever looked on her too much as a child to be her lover?"

"Exactly so," replied Villars. "The letter in your possession tells all. I wish you to read it, and when you have done so, if you will honour me with your attention, I will tell you what has since occurred, and hope you will favour me with your advice, as to how I should act in my present situation."

"Be assured I will serve you to the utmost of my power. Can you not dine with me to-day? We may spend the evening in my study."

"Impossible! When you know more of my story, you will see I could not meet your present guests."

Listowel then acquainted him with his views for Mary; and his hopes that

she might be prevailed upon to listen to Stockdale. "I think," said Listowel, "one word from you would bring her round."

"I believe it would have great weight with her," said Villars; "she has been early habituated to follow my advice. But, pray consider the responsibility I should take on myself.—Before I advise her to take a step, I should be certain it is for her happiness. Can I have some conversation with her? I will return to-morrow.—Excuse me for the present," continued he, "as I see a gay party approaching up the lawn."

During this conversation, Villars had unthinkingly suffered himself to be led towards the house: he now mounted his horse, and rode off.

Listowel looking towards the gay group, discerned his beautiful Frances in earnest conversation with Sybella; the next moment he saw her light figure

bounding towards him, and with a look of assumed importance, she inquired who was the gentleman that just left him.—"Was it Mr. Villars?"

"What, Frances, have you so soon forgotten Mr. Villars?"

"Very true, papa, I should know him even at a greater distance; besides, he would not ride away without speaking to me. Does he dine here?"

"No, it is not in his power. Where, my love, are you going?" said Listowel, detaining her.

"Look, papa, at that little lady, not much bigger than me! Is she not just my match! We are great friends, although she is much older than mamma. Let me hasten to her, she sent me to ask you about Mr. Villars."

Listowel suspected as much, and therefore partly evaded her inquiries.

"Is that the gentleman returning? See, papa, he rides up to the hall-door."

"That is Talbot," replied Listowel, hastening forward to meet him.

Frances went back to her friend, and gave her all the information in her power; her uncle then calling her, she skipped away, unmindful of Sybella's chagrin.

Lord Ardsallagh presented her to Lady Rumbold, who embraced her, saying, she was a lovely girl, and about the height of her daughter Anne.

"Shall we not to-morrow introduce them to each other? I long to see your children; if they resemble you, I will indeed be their parent."

"Lady Rumbold looked confused; and in the quickness of Frances' eye, saw her innocent surprise, and stopped her demand of explanation, by remarking her beautiful little feet.

"Yes, indeed, they are very handsome!" replied Frances; "mamma says, just shaped like hers. They have been under Mr. Ogle's protection since I was

two years old, and he says, they are the prettiest little feet in the world!"

Lord Ardsallagh laughed. "I see, my dear niece! with the family beauty you have a full portion of the family vanity. Pray, who is this Mr. Ogle? Is it your dancing master that compliments you so highly?"

"Oh! no, uncle; do not you know Mr. Ogle is my shoemaker? He has the direction of my feet, and keeps them in shape with his pretty shoes," she said, looking at her feet with evident pleasure.

Lord Ardsallagh laughed. "She has," replied he, "all Mary's *naiveté* of character: it is natural to these girls, or, surely, their French governess would destroy it. Where is Madame to-day?"

"She is gone to Dublin, and happy Frances may laugh and skip. I wish this amusement would last for ever; I was never so happy, I am full of joy!"

"How do you feel," asked Lady Rumbold, "when full of joy?"

" Oh! so happy, and, as if I could do every thing, and dance and jump and skip."

Lord Ardsallagh kissing her affectionately, said—" Dear little girl! may you often have this joyous feeling!"

Lord Ellismore now approached with Mrs. Dunstanville. On their informing him of his son's arrival, he sent a servant to let him know he required his presence instantly.

Lady Elizabeth who, with the rest of the company, returned from the garden, was much pleased to hear their party had such an acquisition as Talbot; and declaring her satisfaction in having her friends assembled, hoped they would not leave her, at least for a few days. This was addressed principally to Mrs. Dunstanville, and the request urged with so much friendship, that she, with her family, would prolong their visit, that the ladies consented; Lord Ellismore and his son were included in the invitation,

which they likewise gladly accepted. The peer was happy to detain his son in Miss Dunstanville's society; her manners he considered so uncommonly prepossessing, that, if once in habits of intimacy with his son, she could not fail of making due impression; and that the lady's prior attachment would prove but a weak barrier, were his Henry anxiously bent on gaining her affections. In his partial eyes, he could not, where he sued, fail of conquest. The young people, he hoped, would thus of themselves bring about his wishes; without his becoming an accomplice in Sybella's dark machinations, at which he shuddered, recoiling with horror when she approached him. His ideas of the female sex were very refined, he could pardon in them no error that proceeded from vulgarity or coarseness. He wondered how Mrs. Dunstanville could endure her, they differed so entirely:—the aunt being as simple as the niece was dark and intriguing.

Talbot interrupted these reflections. His father looked at him for a moment, and found insensibly his anger dissipate, and that with a son so beloved he could only mildly remonstrate.

"Where have you been, Henry?—How could you leave us so abruptly?"

Talbot looked confused; he had no dissimulation, and could not even attempt it with one he venerated so highly. His father loved him for his candour; those characters were ever dearest to him that were most open to inspection, and that did not shun the scrutiny of lynx-eyed friendship.

"Can you not answer me?—What am I to suppose from your silence?" inquired the peer, with a stern air.

"I have been but a week absent, my dear father, and intended to have returned sooner, but was unavoidably detained."

"What will Miss Dunstanville think of your absenting yourself at this time? But, perhaps," added he, smiling, "the

regret she then felt may teach her to value your presence. On this consideration I will pardon your want of gallantry, and ask no question relative to your excursion; as I see you have secrets from your father."

"You wrong me, my dear sir; my whole soul is open to your inspection: but, alas! I cannot promise what you will find there will give you pleasure.—I must own your command and my inclination are not in unison. You frown, and look displeased; but, my dear father, I have still other scruples; the lady you wish me to woo regards me with coldness. Could I meanly take advantage of her rash cousin's will, and rob her of her grandfather's property?"

"Why not endeavour to conquer this coldness! whence this distrust in your own powers of pleasing?" said Lord Ellismore, with a penetrating glance.

"Do you not know her affections have long been engaged?" said Talbot.

"Hah! the trusty, the disinterested Villars gave you this piece of information!"

Talbot looked surprised, and said—"No.—He did not act so kindly by me; like you, he exhorted me to gain her: and said, that although mutual necessity might bring us together, yet, when both were so amiable, we could not fail of happiness. He provoked me by his cold reasoning: and yet, on recollection, he was pale and agitated; begged we might never speak on the subject again; and, indeed, I have never found him at leisure to receive my visits since. Tell me, my dear sir, was he in any way connected with her lover?"

"How did you come by your information if not through him?" demanded his father.

"Pardon me, I am not at liberty to tell," replied Talbot. "But I may trust to you the substance of the intelligence

I received; which is, that her affections are still placed on her first lover; although many years have elapsed since she has seen him: but that, from love and gratitude to her mother, she will not refuse to marry me. Would you, my dear father, wish your son to accept such a sacrifice?—Would she not despise me for taking her on such terms? Would not her indifference, her aversion, imbitter all my pleasures, and destroy for ever my domestic happiness?"

"Henry, you are too romantic;—have too much rodomontade in your character; consider simple circumstances simply as they are. She is a fine young woman, lady-like, without the fantastic flourishes of fashion: she comes of a good stock, and, my life on it, has steady principles. In marrying her, you banish no lover; you obey your father, who will enable you to enter into handsome settlements. The study of your life will be to make her happy:

and I must say, she will have an adamantine heart if she does not love you! I shall then be able to portion off your sisters, without retrenching my present expences. In short, my dear Henry, I must acknowledge to you, our present necessities are great. If you do not marry, your whole family will be plunged into poverty, and you must join me in selling."

"Most willingly, my dear father!—I will give up my allowance;—let me follow a profession."

"Do you wish your father, likewise, and your sisters to follow professions?"

"My dear father, how can you be so cruel as to jest with your son's wishes to serve his family!"

"Where is your spirit, boy! Will you have your father pointed at, as a needy nobleman? To tell you the truth, my son, I am ruined! I cannot be so barbarous as to extend my ruin to you! No, I will not ask you to join me in sel-

ling; but if you marry Eleanor, then I shall not be pointed at as the needy nobleman that reduced himself to penury by gambling, betting, and living like a prince! No, I will then accept of the money you will have in the bank, for myself and your sisters; for which assistance, you will, at my death, receive your patrimony unencumbered. Do, Henry.—What am I to hope? Will you lead us to splendid affluence?—or am I to dread the reverse?"

"My dear father, you distract me! I would do every thing to serve you: but—I am cruelly situated;—allow me at least time to reflect."

"Yes, pray reflect; prudence will be on my side: but clear your brow, do not appear before the ladies with that look of horror; I will tell them you are gone to make your toilette."

CHAPTER XIX.

The other nothing better was than she;
Agreeing in bad will and canker'd kind,
. . . . . .
Her face was ugly, and her mouth distort,
Foaming with poison round about her gills,
In which her cursed tongue (full sharp and strong)
Appear'd like aspis sting, and closely kills,
Or cruelly does wound whom so she wills.

SPENSER.

DURING the early part of the morning, Sybella was stationed by Mrs. Dunstanville, anxiously watching with her for the entrance of Villars. At length when this expectation was over, and the party had strolled into the garden, Mrs. Dunstanville grew weary of her niece, and was happy to accept of Lord Ellismore's profered arm. She begged of him to offer his other arm to Sybella,

but he declined the happiness; and leading her into another walk, said—" You must leave the scarecrow behind, the gardener could not make a better; and if her figure fails, her voice will frighten away the birds."

Mrs. Dunstanville could not help smiling at the justness of the observation. After the small-pox, her niece got a severe cold, which, in a great measure, impaired her hearing, at least so as to make her unable to modulate the tones of her voice, which sometimes amounted to a roar; particularly when inflamed by anger. When she supposed the conversation worth attending to, or not intended for her, she generally understood it perfectly; making up for the deficiency of her hearing by the sharpness of her eye and the steadiness of her observation, and could almost tell by the moving of the lips what was being said. This scrutiny favoured her particularly with

strangers, who, understanding she was nearly deaf, spoke with freedom, taking care only to lower the tones of their voices.

The young people of the party were strolling about in different groups. Sybella did not covet their society; she, however, felt deserted, and, not considering her young, they left her with the elderly ladies. Miss Listowel she thought unpardonable, and Eleanor even still more blameable.

Lady Elizabeth observed her sullen looks, and guessing the cause, desired Robert Belmont to entertain her.

"Surely you cannot be serious," returned he. "What crime have I committed that you would sacrifice my time to this piece of deformity?"

"Politeness requires it; I send you as being the most entertaining personage I know," said her ladyship.

"That compliment almost induces me to comply, provided for every mi-

nute I spend with this cross old maiden, you give me six of your charming company?"

"I promise; provided you banish her frowns, and make her assume a smiling countenance."

"Oh, that indeed would be a Herculean labour!—but where there is such a reward, it is at least worth the attempt. Prepare me by saying who she is, and all that."

"Worthy, I assure you of your attention. You see the worst of her—for although she is not gifted with wit or beauty, she may yet one day be invested with all the glitter of affluence. She is the only child of Mr. Dunstanville, of Dunstanville Hall, one of the richest commoners in England. Therefore I think no contemptible speculation for Dean Belmont's younger son."

"Can you suppose any one but your lovely self, can for a moment occupy my attention?"

"I do not mean to compare my attractions with her's.—Pray, hasten to your duty, she just turned down that walk, looking very scornful. I will send some one to relieve you as soon as possible."

Robert soon overtook her, but could with difficulty force himself to address her, her countenance was so forbidding. At length he accosted her.

"I hope I do not intrude; Lady Elizabeth has assigned to me the pleasing office of pointing out to your observation all in these gardens worthy of inspection. May I flatter myself that you will accept my services?"

Sybella bowed her head in acquiescence. He began an elaborate description of the gardens, the house, the neighbourhood, &c. At length he was quite exhausted, and not finding a subject to interest her, began to think she was as insensible as she was plain; for, with all his efforts, he had scarcely ex-

torted from her a monosyllable. The truth was, she did not hear him; her mind was busily employed in considering, if she could in any way render him useful in conducting her plans; or in obtaining an interview with Villars, without letting him understand she was in any measure interested.

Robert was meditating his escape; and proposed they should join his sister and Lady Rumbold, who were coming down the opposite walk.

"No," replied she, smiling. By the motion of his hand and the turn of his eye she knew what he meant, having, in consequence of his silence, that moment looked at him—"You have been so agreeable, that, if you please, we will turn down this walk; and then, perhaps, we shall meet Miss Dunstanville."

He was in amaze. Sybella was again silent. Again Robert held forth, until he was convinced, from her abstracted air, that she did not hear a word he

uttered. To bring it to proof, he said aloud, without changing his voice or manner—"I am certain my companion, who thinks me so amusing, does not hear a word I utter." He then resumed his former subject, and seeing no change in her countenance, was convinced she was as deaf as a post.

The oddity of wasting his breath so long, for the entertainment of a deaf lady, struck him as being so ridiculous, that for his life he could not help laughing.

Sybella soon discovered she was the object of his mirth, and casting towards him a scornful glance, said—"I think, Mr. Belmont, this conversation entertains you more than it enlivens me."

"Pardon me, Miss Dunstanville, you appear so wrapt up in your meditations, that I cannot possibly interest you. Perhaps, if you choose the subject, I may be more successful."

"I do not hear what you say, if you

will be so good as to repeat what you last said, and to look at me when you speak ?" said Sybella.

He did as she desired; but the oddity of the occurrence again, when looking her full in the face, affected his risible organs, and again he laughed.

Her anger made her look still more hideous; she grew pale with passion; but well aware giving way to it would only increase his mirth, she tried to compose herself, and gulping down her resentment, said calmly, she would take as a favour his naming the company that were of their morning's entertainment. He did so.

She listened attentively.

"You have," she replied, "forgotten Mr. Villars: was he not among the group ?"

"No; he left Mr. Listowel's family some time ago," replied Belmont. "You allude to the report of his marriage with Miss Listowel. Can you

for a moment suppose they would consent to enrol, as a member of their family, one whom nobody knows? Believe it, the family have too much pride. No; they refused him even one of their illegitimate offspring, whom he proposed for, to have it appear that he had no thoughts of Miss Listowel."

"You amaze me! Was the girl he wanted to marry, handsome?"

"She was beautiful as an angel!" replied Belmont.

"Was she rich?" demanded Sybella.

"Only in charms."

"I wish I could see him!" said Sybella.

"Why this curiosity? I cannot see why the ladies find him so attractive. His manners are melancholy, and he is seldom at leisure to pay them much attention."

"You say you do not know what part of England he came from?" observed Sybella.

"To me he is perfectly unknown;—nor do I desire a further acquaintance," returned Belmont.

Sybella saw from the determined dislike, expressed in Belmont's countenance towards Villars, that there was no danger of his repeating her inquiries to him. She likewise discovered a certain malign expression lurking in his eye, that tallied with Mary's character of him, and gave her the brightest hopes. She was determined, however, to express herself cautiously; and not at once betray all her feelings towards Villars. She therefore said, affecting a careless air—"I am curious to see this person, as I fancy you are all mistaken in him; and that he is an old friend of mine.—Friend, indeed, I should not call him; as the only attribute he retains with me of friendship is, that of never being forgotten."

"I am all curiosity. Pray, madam, tell me who he is?"

"Alas! pronouncing even his name would be painful to me! He is an ungrateful monster, and is indebted to me for life!"

Belmont looked at her with unfeigned amazement. "Is it possible, madam? Then, he is your son!"

"My son!—Do you know, sir, whom you are talking to? Know! that even scandal never breathed a suspicion against my fair fame!—Son, indeed! were he even a child; but to accuse me of being the mother of a man six feet high—insufferable!"

"Pray," said Belmont, with a contrite air, "forgive my error.—I grant it is unpardonable. I am ready to make any amends, to undergo any penance for my blindness that you please to inflict."

"A thought strikes me," said she, growing calmer, and putting her skinny finger to her mouth. "Will you assist me?"

"In what?"

"In obtaining an interview with Villars."

"Oh, with pleasure! and I will not regret your tormenting him a little: I have no patience with him for pretending to that beautiful girl."

"Let me but see him, to assure myself I am not tormenting the wrong man, and then leave him to me; fear not but I will be his fate!"

"I bow to your superior genius," said Belmont, gazing at her with astonishment, as having the most diabolical countenance he ever beheld. "Let us," said he, "turn down this walk away from the crowd that are approaching, until we arrange matters."

CHAPTER XX.

And fancy with the darkest hue of fear
Shapes every thought that most the bosom grieves,
And sad despair and shadowy fear believes!

OBERON.

EARLY in the evening the ball-room was filled by a very numerous assembly; and to Mr. Listowel's great satisfaction, the ball was opened by Stockdale and Mary.

Eleanor did not dance; she looked pale and ill; and complaining of a head-ache, acknowledged to Sybella, that, but for fear of alarming her mother, she would go to bed.

Sybella looked horrified.—"Oh! do not let her know you are ill!—She will make such a fuss about you, as if you were superior to all the world!"

The cousins sat down together.

"It was very civil of you," said Sybella, sharply, "to run away from me this morning."

"I left you with my mother, not thinking you would be able to attend Miss Listowel in all her rambles."

"Who was with you?"

"Mr. Stockdale."

"I think it is likely he will rival Mr. Villars," said Sybella, fixing her penetrating eyes on Eleanor, and continued, "Dear! how you blush! Hah! so you have discovered Mr. Villars and your runaway are one.—He makes, it seems, a practice of refusing young girls: for as soon as the Listowels accepted him for their daughter, he was off; and proposed for another lady in humbler life: but she, disgusted with the versatility of his fancy, rejected him; and I suppose he is now returning to England, to propose for more beauties."

Eleanor felt her heart sicken at this

spiteful attack. She set the whole of the accusation down to malice, and bore all with apparent composure, which disappointed, and enraged Sybella.

Robert Belmont took the first opportunity in finding Lady Elizabeth's attention disengaged, to station himself by her side.

"I come," he said, "to claim my promised reward." He then gave her a ludicrous account of his conversation with Sybella. When he came to mention Villars, he paused. "I must acknowledge," continued he, "she astonished me; and I think, when you hear all, you will do justice to my penetration. At present I can say no more, lest we should be overheard.—Will you take a walk in the Park to-morrow?"

LordArdsallagh approached:—"I am deputed, my dear sister," he said, "from Lady Rumbold, to know who that little personage is, seated by Miss Dunstanville?"

Mrs. Belmont waddled after him, saying—"I am come on the same errand. Upon my credit she is as extraordinary a little body as ever I see. *Bobby* was walking with her all the morning—his queen of the fairies, but she looks taller now."

Lady Elizabeth, putting her finger to her lip, and pointing to Mrs. Dunstanville, who sat very near, informed them, in an under voice, who she was.

Mrs. Belmont was in raptures.—"Do you hear that, *Bob*, my boy?—you will catch her heart in a twinkling!"

"I do not think, madam, Mary-Anne will consent to place so ugly a little devil in the picture frame allotted for my wife."

"Ardsallagh," asked Lady Elizabeth, "is your picture finished?"

"Yes, my dear sister! Lady Rumbold's is likewise finished: we are now ready for framing."

"You must wait," cried Mrs. Bel-

mont, "until all *is* finished. There is Mary-Anne yet to be provided for. I have, indeed, disposed of *Car.* poor gentle soul! The melancholy, silent Colonel Gillen has taken a fancy to her."

"Mr. Robert Belmont told me so this evening. I sincerely congratulate you on your daughter's happiness."

"Upon my credit, he is a fine gentleman! But, to tell the truth, my dear, he is rather dull: truly, he does not understand my jokes, and takes me so serious, and so literally, that I sometimes almost think him a *naturalist!* But, hush! I would not say this to *Car.* for the world; indeed, I should not run him down; for he is mighty agreeable, and has taken my heaviest lumber off my hands; not but what she is a good child to me, which promises well for Don Dismal, with his white teeth, dying eyes, and large whiskers."

Lord Ardsallagh laughed, and again looking towards Sybella, said—"I sup-

pose I may tell Lady Rumbold, that little fairy queen yonder, is Mrs. Robert Belmont elect?"

He returned to Lady Rumbold.

"Upon my credit, my lady, I believe 'tis *his own self* will be the first to take a trip to the land of matrimony!—for as sure as a gun, *he popped* this morning!"

Lady Elizabeth smiled, and for a moment was at a loss to understand her. "I almost," said she, "expected it. Has her ladyship accepted his offer?"

"Ha! that's a good one! Will a duck swim? Will an elegant lady refuse such a fine clever man, with such a fine property, and an earldom into the bargain?"

"Where is Walter?" inquired Robert.

"Poor little *Watty!* my heart bleeds for all the mortifications the little soul meets with! It was but this morning, Miss Mary was so good as to say she would crown him her King Walter.—Well, he lost that, and his poney, from fatigue. He *did himself up*, practising

with his tailor; who was to make his dress modish, and yet elastic for stooping: my poor fellow nearly got the lumbago instead of his fifty pounds. Well, then that generous young creature, Miss Mary, pitying his distress, which she knew was brought on by his adoration of her, promised to give him the myrtle wreath, if he would write a copy of verses. Poor *Watty* never in his life strung a rhyme, *Bobby* there, having run away with all the poetry in the family. Well, he caught Mr. Villars, and shut him up in an old building to write verses, which the poor boy intended to pass for his own. Let him alone, he does not want for *cuteness!* Upon my credit, it would have done mighty well, only Miss Dunstanville was in the building; and although they were there shut up for two hours, he did not write a line."

Mrs. Dunstanville, who had for some time joined their party, turned pale, and

asked in a hurried manner, if it were her daughter.

Mrs. Belmont replied in the affirmative; and continued—"The poor boy came to me quite disconsolate, and in order to raise his spirits, I took him to visit an old friend, whom I had not seen for these twenty years, Mrs. Liddel. Well, we had a *power of chat*, and *Watty* sat all the time patient enough; at last she asked me to take some refreshment after my walk: I refused, as I never lunched, and was *as full as a tick*, after the grand breakfast I had eat with your ladyship; upon which, she said, *making* a pretty endearing voice;—'Perhaps I can prevail on little master to eat some bread and jam?' I laughed, and said, those days were over with him: the lady looked shocked; *Watty* turned red and pale with mortification; and he has not held up his head since; nothing but the myrtle crown can console him."

"I wish you would interfere for my poor brother," said Robert.

"Well, I leave his cause in your hands;" said Mrs. Belmont, walking off with Mrs. Dunstanville.

"Miss Listowel," said Robert, "has not treated him with common civility, ever since he offended her by refusing to dance with Miss Kelly, and slighted her minion, Mr. Villars."

"Hush! they are forgotten now, and will be no longer brought forward in our family."

"I know not, madam, which, to admire or pity, the innocence, dare I call it credulity, of your character?—You will suspect no one. Villars, to my knowledge, had this day a conference an hour long with Mr. Listowel;—I have reason to know she is sent for;—very probably she is now in Dublin, I suppose to be married, and your children robbed to portion her."

"You will set me distracted!" said

Lady Elizabeth, pale with anger. "Is it possible! Do you love to torture me? or have you reason for what you say?"

"I only anticipate public report."—Belmont paused. "You will draw down Mr. Listowel's wrath on me for ever, if from your manner he suspect I have made this known to you. Be on your guard! oh, my friend! do not betray those that serve you! Believe me, you will find shortly, as Junius says, 'There is a moment of difficulty and danger, at which flattery and falsehood can no longer deceive, and simplicity itself,' bowing to Lady Elizabeth, 'can no longer be misled.'"

"You amaze me!" replied her ladyship, shuddering, and looking ready to faint. "Forgive me; I should be miserable did I not question your authority."

"Well, madam, your ignorance is so blissful, it would be cruel to remove the veil: I will leave that to time, who will do it with no gentle hand."

Lady Elizabeth could not reply, and afraid of betraying her emotion, withdrew to the conservatory adjoining the drawing-room.

Belmont followed her, and exerted all his eloquence to destroy her confidence in her husband, and teach her to consider him as her only true friend. He endeavoured to make her believe, that Listowel, taking advantage of Stockdale's being so much in love with Mary, would give her to him portionless, or at least, with only a nominal fortune; requiring all the money he could raise, to wipe off the stain of Louisa's birth, and induce Lord Ellismore to receive her. He then dwelt on his brother's passion for Mary, which, he feared, would prey on his constitution, if she did not favour his suit, and induce Mary to show him some pity. He hinted, that her doing so would disappoint Listowel's ambitious views for his illegitimate daughter; and ultimately succeeded in drawing a promise from her, that she would not

oppose Walter's suit. He added, with a tender air, and pressing her hand to his lips, that as one must unavoidably fall a sacrifice, it would be cruel to deprive his mother of both her sons.

He then, in a hurried manner, left her, astonished at his unaccountable conduct. She would have resented his freedom, but, knowing him from a boy, she still considered him as such; and attributed the tenderness of his farewell to gratitude for her having granted his suit. She might have been clearer sighted, but that her mind was engrossed by the strength of his assertions, and a painful curiosity to discover those circumstances that he predicted would yet cause her uneasiness.

CHAPTER XXI.

Strong assertions without proof, declamation without argument, and violent censures without dignity or moderation.

JUNIUS.

The next day, Robert Belmont came into the drawing room, looking very important; Mary and Eleanor were seated in a window, but so engaged by work and conversation, they did not perceive his entrance. Not so Sybella; she was ever on the alert, and eyeing him with the strictest scrutiny, fixed herself so as that she might watch the motion of his lips, as he spoke in an under voice to Lady Elizabeth.

"No longer, my injured friend," he said, "shall you accuse me of using strong assertions without proof! My

curricle is at the door, we will drive into town.—Have the courage to trust yourself to my care, and I will prove to you, by ocular demonstration, that Louisa is now in Dublin."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Lady Elizabeth.

"It is too true! and further, in corroboration of our surmises, she is come up with Mrs. Jackson. But we are observed," said he, glancing at Sybella.

"Oh! she is deaf, and cannot hear us," said Lady Elizabeth.

"She can read us; never did I see so penetrating an eye!"

"But if the world know my wrongs, I do not care who hears us."

"I am silent if you do not act with more discretion."

"For pity's sake," said she, looking most beseechingly, "do not keep me cruelly in suspense!—I will act just as you please!

"I have about two words to say to

Miss Sybella Dunstanville:—then I am at your disposal."

Lady Elizabeth was curious to know what he could have to say at such a moment, to one he was so slightly acquainted with. He spoke low, and evidently tried to prevail on her to listen in silence, or else to reduce her harsh discordant voice to a whisper. But a very few words reached her ladyship's ear, and they only raised her curiosity: she heard, *Villars,—my brother,—capricious beauty,—Louisa.*

The conference being soon over, he handed her ladyship to the curricle.

Lady Elizabeth's first question was —"What were you saying to Sybella?"

Belmont appeared confused; trying to turn it off with a laugh, he said—"you are surprised our natures are so different, that there can be any interest between that little fairy and me.—It seems Mr. Villars was her *quondam* lover; which, by the way, surprised me a

good deal. I thought he had been a man of more taste."

When they were gone a few yards, they saw Mr. Villars turn down the back approach, muffled up in his great coat, his hat drawn over his face.

"Now, what would your ladyship give to know the cause of these private meetings?"

"I am, indeed, surprised," said her ladyship; "but still more curious to know what we are going to town for."

"Mrs. Jackson is there.—Would you not wish to see her, to make inquiries about Listowel Park?" said Belmont.

"No, indeed!—I have not the least wish."

"You will find with her a *protegé* of yours."

"Is it possible!—Have they had the assurance to bring her to Dublin with my servant?" said Lady Elizabeth.

"For the best of all possible reasons," said Belmont. "I suppose you know, from others beside me, that Talbot

is her admirer, her serious admirer? Nay, even as I told you, to the downfal of his father's ambitious prospects: however, it will require some of the Listowel oak to bring the old peer round."

"This is a fancy of yours; Listowel would not be so shameless. Talbot is engaged to Eleanor; Mrs. Dunstanville herself told me this, although you look so incredulous."

"You mistake me;" returned this artful young man:—"I believe the higher powers are deceived, and are proceeding with the treaty of marriage; but with what prospect of conclusion you shall judge. You know of Talbot's late unaccountable absence. After taking a very unlover-like leave of Eleanor, he flew on the wings of love to Louisa, and would not return until she consented to accompany him.—Mrs. Jackson is the *chaperon*."

"Let us return; you do not seriously intend I should visit her?"

"Must I put a gentle force on your

inclinations? For, unless you have ocular demonstration, you will say the whole business is a fancy of mine."

"I am a most miserable woman! My poor children are to be robbed for this girl, and deprived of all chance of making brilliant matches. How came you by this information?"

"Through the medium of the little witch you recommended me to patronize; by the virtue of her cabalistic charms, she pretends to have made great discoveries: their manœuvres, it seems, are interesting to her; as she fears Villars will, on Talbot's rejection of Eleanor, again, and with more chance of success, become a candidate for her favour. This idea haunts her, she has no rest night or day. I offered her my assistance, which she construes into blindly devoting myself to her service. She is a most singular being; and, I confess, sometimes amuses me; and, ugly and insignificant as she is, I have obeyed her authoritative commands."

"Since you have learned to obey," said her ladyship, "attend to my order: let us return,—I would not for the world see this girl.—I should certainly say something wounding to her feelings, which would cost me the bitterest repentance; for, after all, the poor child cannot be in fault; and, whether it is from her likeness to every one I love, or, from her extreme beauty, her power of fascinating me is almost as great as Sybella's over you. Do pray turn the carriage."

Belmont reluctantly obeyed, after a slight remonstrance.

"I do not, indeed," said Lady Elizabeth, "doubt your information; my conduct will show it;—I will withdraw my consent to Mr. Stockdale's union with my daughter. But as to your brother, do not, for a moment, suppose I could encourage his attachment:—in consequence of my promise, I will not oppose him; but, were he not your brother, I would tell him, his

thinking of my beautiful Mary, was the height of presumption. At all events, my consent will not avail him much: I wonder you ever encouraged him in such folly! Have you not penetration to discover that he is laughed at by most of the young ladies?—Mary never listens to his soft speeches but for that purpose."

They now approached Holly Mount; and from a distance saw Villars alight, and go into a house, they supposed for the purpose of avoiding them.

Belmont hinted that Villars was Listowel's active friend, and a most zealous one in his new formed plans. He continued more fully to detail, on finding her credulously listening to all his assertions.

They now arrived at the door: poor Lady Elizabeth was dreadfully agitated. Villars, evidently avoiding her, to her romantic mind appeared in the highest degree mysterious; and a confirmation

strong of all Robert Belmont's allegations against her husband; whom she met in no pleasant mood, when he came to the carriage to hand her out. Listowel looked unusually pleased, and as if he had something of vast import to communicate; whilst Lady Elizabeth, sullen and silent, tried to pass on; fearing to discover her mortification, and betray Belmont. Her displeasure was much increased by his air of triumph, doubly provoking when contrasted with her mournful feelings.

"Where, my love! are you going?" said Listowel, stopping her, "I wish to have some conversation with you."

"With me? Surely," said she, with a disdainful smile, "I am not to be called into counsel."

"Who so likely," said he, gently leading her to the library. He then informed her that his daughter had referred Mr. Stockdale to them for an answer, and that he hoped she would, with him, approve

of her choice, and give up, to ensure Mary's happiness, her ambitious projects. He alluded to her encouragement of the Duke of Heitherdown, who had lately become Mary's suitor.

Lady Elizabeth for a moment made no reply. When she could command her voice, she inquired, with affected calmness, when Mr. Villars had been there.

"This morning.—You suppose Mary still likes him;—in that, my love, you are mistaken; —she respects and reveres him. Indeed, she refused to give Stockdale an answer until she saw him: he came here this morning by my desire."

"His conversation must have been long-winded; I met him but this moment returning."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Listowel. "He took leave of us at one o'clock: I saw him depart, I do not know what detained him, but am positive Mary did not.—Why is it, my love! Mary's determina-

tion does not seem to give you pleasure? I expected it would."

"No, truly. What settlement does he intend making?" inquired her ladyship.

"I suppose in proportion to his fortune, and to the fortune we give," replied her husband.

"Yes," returned Lady Elizabeth; "I suppose he will strike a fair balance!—The family, I believe, were formerly merchants.—Oh! what blindness! what romance in Mary, to lose this opportunity of raising herself to the peerage!—Duchess of Heitherdown!—how respectable! She would be our pride! With what secret satisfaction we should speak of our daughter the duchess!"

"Yes, and of our elderly son the duke!" said Listowel, laughing. "No, no; let age and infirmity seek alliances, if they want to marry, among rich citizens' daughters; or, if money is no object, among the daughters of needy

nobility:—independent commoners, as we are, may allow our children to marry from affection,—provided their choice fall on one of good family and unexceptionable character.—At all events, Heitherdown is out of the question. Mary would never consent: she says he is old enough to be her grandpapa. His estates, besides, are sadly encumbered; twice the amount of Mary's fortune would scarcely relieve him from his difficulties."

"Surely on our property that sum would be easily raised: he has the finest jewels, such quantities, all fashionable, set for his wife the late duchess. We should not, for so paltry a consideration, sacrifice so splendid an alliance," said her ladyship.

"To insure my daughter's happiness I would even sell to raise the money.—But, pray consider, *you*, I may say *we*, have encouraged Stockdale; and, on what grounds now could we withdraw

our approbation? I am afraid you have had a disagreeable drive; you are not well, you seem cold," he said, affectionately taking her hand.

"My hand is warm, but my heart is chilled." She spoke with difficulty, repressing a convulsive sob.

"What, my love! can be the matter?" said Listowel alarmed, and with a tenderness of manner, which, had she not promised secrecy, would have induced her to unfold all her suspicions, and probably, to have acted an hysteric scene; but, now she found it necessary to repress emotion, and, although, unpractised, she succeeded in making her husband believe she was merely fatigued. He was so accustomed to her displaying every feeling, that he did not think she could disguise the slightest emotion.

On leaving Listowel, she went to her boudoir, where, to her surprise, she found Robert Belmont and Sybella. He

apologised for the liberty he had taken. "How could I refuse when the attraction was so powerful?" he said, bowing to Sybella; "and the command so imperative, I could only submit."

Lady Elizabeth smiled; saying, she would excuse him, since he was under such good guidance; and then turned to Sybella for an explanation; who, affecting to blush and look modest, made such frightful grimaces, that when she turned to Belmont to speak for her, he was very near bursting into a fit of laughter. When he could command his voice, he told Lady Elizabeth that Miss Dunstanville came to request her assistance in obtaining an interview with Mr. Villars.

"I am sorry I did not know your wish sooner. Why did you not see him when he was here this morning?"

"She had no kind friend," replied Belmont, "to manage it for her. Now

there is no time to be lost, as he is to sail in this night's packet."

"What is to be done? unless she go to Dublin," said Lady Elizabeth.

"Send an express for him," replied Robert Belmont: and turning to Sybella; "Even the detaining him is an object—"

"Of the utmost import," rejoined Sybella eagerly.

"Say," continued Belmont, addressing Lady Elizabeth, "that you wish to have some conversation with him before he sails. If I am not very much mistaken, he will consider himself highly indebted to you."

"On what pretence shall I send for him?"

"Say you request he will defer his departure until to-morrow night, as you wish most particularly to see him to-morrow, at any hour most convenient for him to appoint. The particular business," said he, smiling, "Miss Sy-

bella will furnish you with before he arrives."

Lady Elizabeth wrote a note to that purport, which Belmont undertook to have expeditiously forwarded; requesting Lady Elizabeth would not mention the circumstance, or else the whole plan would be marred.

"Plan!" exclaimed Lady Elizabeth, "Am I entering into plans?—I will, however, promise to keep your secret, only until after I have seen Villars."

"I am satisfied. Shall I conduct you back to the drawing-room, my *queen of mischief?*" said he, turning to Sybella.

"Leave me here, if you please, unless, perhaps, your ladyship would consider my remaining a little longer an intrusion."

Belmont left the ladies, and met Listowel, as he was shutting the door of the apartment. High displeasure was expressed in his countenance; and Belmont observed, that he apparently

changed his intention of entering the room, and turned into the library.

Belmont perceived he was out of favour, and viewed with a suspicious eye: he regretted this, and hoping to regain his confidence by appearing engrossed with Sybella, determined to consult him on paying her his addresses. Listowel had for some time expressed his disapprobation of Belmont; he thought he was too constantly with Lady Elizabeth.—He knew his wife was bred up with strict principles; and that, hitherto, she prided herself on being an affectionate wife and tender mother. He would not suppose in those respects she was changed; but, with sorrow he observed, she never had a *tête-à-tête* with this silly young man, that her manners towards him were not cold and distant. He reproached himself with having relaxed in attentions, which he ever found necessary to guard her against the designing. Her mind was weak; her conduct chiefly

governed by the opinion of the world.—He therefore feared, if too much left to herself, she might, even for fashion's sake, pique herself on behaving to him with indifference, and show her spirit in resenting the mystery he observed in his charge of Louisa.

CHAPTER XXII.

The sight which keen affection clears,
How can it judge amiss ?
To me it pictur'd hope; and taught
My spirit this consoling thought,
That love's sun, though it rise in tears,
May set in bliss !

CAMOENS.

LISTOWEL had, of late, suffered much anxiety on Louisa's account. He heard from Mrs. Jackson, that her spirits had drooped ever since the family left Listowel Park; that she had grown very thin; had lost her appetite; and that Mr. and Mrs. Kelly were miserable lest she should fall into a decline. Listowel showed this letter to his friend, Doctor Berry, who advised change of air and change of scene; recommending, in the

first instance, that they should bring her to Dublin; as, on seeing her, he could prescribe with more confidence.

Mr. Kelly still lamented Louisa's having refused Mr. Villars: he did not say much to her on the subject; but she saw it weighed heavily on his spirits. He frequently admonished her to give up all thoughts of Talbot, whom he represented as having behaved very ill, in addressing her whilst his father had engaged him to another; and that, even independent of this engagement, he would never consent to his union with Louisa. Every word he uttered on this subject added to the depression of poor Louisa's spirits; particularly, as she could not impart to him the ray of hope Listowel gave her; but was obliged to let him believe the current report, and suppose her Listowel's daughter; and, under that supposition, allow Edward to obtain his sanction for corresponding with her. Edward's

letters, affectionate as they were, gave her much pain, in renewing her self-reproaches, for receiving information that obliged her to behave reservedly to her best friends. She loved and revered Mr. Kelly as her parent—there never had been the least reserve between them. This secret, therefore, was an intolerable burthen, and forced her often to seek Mrs. Jackson's company, with whom she felt comparatively happy. Talbot was a first-rate favourite with Mrs. Jackson; his perfections were her favourite theme—she was never tired of narrating anecdotes of his benevolence. Judith, likewise, constantly sounded his praises; saying, she was certain they were born for each other. Miss *Lowsey* was, to be sure, the sweetest young lady in the world!—She was certain he would soon return and carry her off in his coach and six.

Great, therefore, was her exultation one morning, when she came running

into the sitting room, where Louisa was at work with Mrs. Jackson, crying out—"He is come!—he is come! Miss *Lowsey's* sweet-heart!—I *seen* him with my own two eyes, and Bryan along with him, sitting *along-side* of the master, as fine as a lord!"

"Pray, Judith," said Mrs. Jackson, "be a little rational!—Where did you see Mr. Talbot?"

"In his *shandram*, as Bryan calls it; who, when he saw me, jumped out, and gave me such a hearty *buss*, that I should have boxed him for want of manners, but my heart was too full."

"Where is Mr. Talbot? Did he say he was coming here? Pray be more collected."

"A blister on my tongue! I told him you, Miss *Lowsey*, were at the Glebe; and off he sets, like the folks at a steeple chase, over hedge and ditch! He was not long gone, when, as I was prating with Bryan, a *gossoon* told me you were

here at the Park; so off I *runs* to you; Bryan went for his master; and I think master and man will be here in a *giffy*. As sure as *eggs is eggs*, here they are!" said Judith; her face flushed, and still out of breath, as she ran out to show his honour into the drawing-room.

Mrs. Jackson participated in Louisa's pleasure; who, although surprised and agitated at the sudden intelligence of his arrival, was near fainting; yet, on his approach, and at the sound of his voice, she revived. Her blushes heightened her attractions; and Talbot thought she never looked so lovely.

"My dearest Louisa!" said he, tenderly taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips; "the very sight of you revives all my hopes!—Absence is the magnifier of every ill. I heard you were far, very far from well; and left Dublin a most miserable man; but my grief, like the mist of the morning, is dispelled by the sun-shine of your looks!—You are thin,

but look as blooming, as beautiful as ever! Louisa cast down her eyes, in bashful embarrassment, from his ardent gaze. She was anxious to know the motive of his visit.—Was it merely to see her—or had he made any discovery relative to her parents, which might authorize her to look to an alliance with him. She then reflected, how strongly Mr. Kelly would condemn their present interview: which, if she did not promptly terminate, she would have to reproach herself with wilfully disobeying her revered preceptor. She, therefore, tried to command her feelings; and, after a short pause, demanded if he had any communication to make on the subject nearest her heart.

"All his communications," he smilingly replied, "were intended to interest her heart."

At this declaration, Mrs. Jackson rose to leave the room. Louisa begged she would be seated, as they had no secrets from her.

Talbot said he was happy Mrs. Jackson was present, as he expected to find in her a zealous friend. He then represented, that his father could not in honour, in consequence of the engagement he had entered into with Mrs. Dunstanville, consent to their union; but, there was no reason to suppose he would not, when they were married, grant his pardon, and approve of her for his daughter-in-law. "I have taken care," he said, "to hold myself perfectly disengaged. I esteem and admire Miss Dunstanville; but am happy to say, this engagement of our parents' contracting, seems as contrary to her inclinations as to mine."

"Do not, my dear friend!" said Louisa, looking mournfully, "urge me further. I felt dreadfully distressed six weeks ago at refusing you;—the circumstances you know are still the same; and I am even now, in listening to you, guilty of very great indiscretion."

She would have said more; but Mr.

Kelly and Mr. Jackson entered the room; the former cast an angry glance at Talbot, and a look of pity at Louisa. He seated himself by her; and said he feared she fatigued herself too much, by walking in the heat of the day; that he would request of her, while the hot weather lasted, not to leave the shade during the morning; and that in the evening, he would himself conduct her to Mrs. Jackson's.

Mrs. Jackson now came forward, and said, Mr. Jackson had just received a letter, which made it necessary for them to go immediately to Dublin; that she was rejoiced at this; as she was certain, it would not be difficult to prevail on her young friend to accompany them. "I am certain," continued she, addressing Mr. Kelly; "you will have no objection, as you may remember it was but yesterday, we were planning an excursion; change of air would be so good for her."

Louisa said nothing; but it was easy

to read in her intelligent countenance, what pleasure his compliance would give her.

He did not keep her long in suspense, but assenting to the justness of Mrs. Jackson's observation, inquired when she purposed leaving home. Mr. Jackson said, his business was so urgent that he must be in town on the following Friday. It was then Monday, which, Mr. Kelly observed, left Louisa but a short time for preparation: he added, in an under voice;—"You cannot, my love, think of mixing in the great world in this humble attire. Here is a thirty-pound note for you; you had better consult your friend Mrs. Jackson on its expenditure."

"My dear father!" said the amazed Louisa, "is it possible! Is this large sum of money for me? Do not for a moment suppose I will take it. I know your income; believe me my dress is very respectable; and with a small addition I shall pass among a crowd."

"Take it, my child," said the good man, much affected; "and without a scruple you may spend it. I received it about an hour ago, enclosed in an anonymous letter, from a person that styles you his daughter."

"Oh, let me read it!" said Louisa, eagerly taking the letter. It contained but a few lines, returning Mr. Kelly thanks for his conscientious care of his daughter. It was not, he said, at present his intention to withdraw her from his protection, but hearing that of late her health had declined, it was his wish that she should take the first proper opportunity of going to Dublin to consult the physicians. He enclosed a note for thirty pounds, that she might equip herself properly, and pay the necessary expences attending her journey."

Louisa returned him the letter; it was in some degree calculated to raise her spirits, as a proof of her father's care and consideration; who, now, for

the first time, declared his intention of claiming her; but she could not rejoice, at what she saw overwhelmed her valued preceptor with sorrow. She was at a loss to console him, as he uttered no complaint. After meditating for some time, he continued, in an under tone—"You are now, my dear child, sensible that we shall shortly be deprived of you, and ——"

"Never! my dearest father!" said Louisa, taking his hand, "no new tie, will ever make me forget the love and duty I owe you and my dearest mother. I should leave you, indeed, with a heavy heart, if I thought any circumstance should lead you to part with me, to give up the child you have reared, and that loves you so dutifully; that at your command," said she, blushing deeply, whilst the tears trickled down her cheeks, "I give up the person, next yourself, dearest to me in the world. I cannot leave you, my dearest

father! unless you promise my absence shall be a short one, and that you will never forbid my return."

"Oh! I can safely promise you that!" returned the curate. "I do not think I could give the order to banish you; it would be like tearing out my heart. You never, my dearest love! can meet with parents who love you better than we do. But I agitate you; be composed, my darling. I think the time for your preparation is so short, that we had better now return home to dinner. I will beg of Mrs. Jackson to take you this evening to ——, that you may purchase the things you want. We do not go with you ourselves, as we are so very ignorant of these matters: it is now some years since my good woman was in a smart shop."

"How much better," said Louisa, "she spends both her money and her time!"

"Whom will you take with you? You did not read the postscript, in which

he says it will be necessary for you to have an attendant."

"I am delighted to hear it," said Louisa. "May I not take Judith? She is such a faithful creature, always so much attached to me!"

"You have my consent," returned her guardian. "Now, my dear love! I must say a few words to you: I do not require of you," said he, faintly smiling, "to give up that person next to me.—No; all I require of you is, not to form any engagement without the sanction of his father:—consequently, not to be much in his company—never alone—or else report would cast a slur on your fair fame, and say, you endeavoured to seduce the young man from his duty."

"Depend on it you shall be obeyed," said Louisa, as they went to the adjoining apartment, where Mrs. Jackson led them, to show Talbot the picture, her pupil was drawing from memory, of Listowel.

Mr. Kelly had not seen it since the morning it was begun, and was astonished at the progress she had made.

"I must, my dear Louisa!" said he, "compliment you on your great application in every thing you undertake."

"Application," observed Talbot, "is a proof of a strong mind; one of the truest we have."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Kelly, looking at Louisa; "it proves we can keep steady to our duty, and resist the little temptations that hourly assail us; it gives the mind a habit of self-denial, which strengthens and prepares it for greater and more powerful temptations."

Louisa sighed: she felt her father's meaning, and prayed her conduct might never fall short of his expectation; and as a proof of her willing obedience, reminded him it was Mrs. Kelly's dinner hour, and that they had better return,

CHAPTER XXIII.

" And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent ;
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent."

TALBOT remained at Killarney until the Jacksons were ready to commence their journey. He then offered to escort them : this Louisa positively forbid ; but at length Mr. Kelly allowed him to meet them at the inns where they stopped

The Kellys were deeply afflicted at parting with Louisa. The old lady's grief was ungovernable.

" Never, my Louisa, will you be the same child to me again ! You are so beautiful, some lord will carry you

off! I knew it," she exclaimed, whilst sobs and tears interrupted her speech, "when I dreamed that a great eagle came and snatched up my favourite lamb!"

"I am happy, any how, that *goes* with her," said Judith, wiping her eyes. "Troth, I pity the *ould* madam more than any of *yese;* she is for all the world like that poor careful *hin*, that cannot follow her young ducks into the pond: see! there she sits, full of terror, lest they can no more swim than herself; she has not the *sinse* like you, *honey*, to consider their natures, and that they are born to support themselves in water: no more is there any fear of my young mistress when she gets among the fine quality. The folks at the Park may say what they will in disparagement—but she has as great blood as any one in the kingdom. She came here a little *piccaniny*, and was she not the head of us all? Where was

a child to compare with her in breeding and in genteel ways?"

During this conversation, Mr. Kelly was talking to Louisa. He requested she would write to him constantly.—On mature deliberation, he thought she might, in her conduct towards Talbot, be guided by Mr. Listowel, who certainly seemed to have her interest strongly at heart; and from knowing her connexions, was more capable than he could be of giving her advice.

She then took an affectionate leave of her surrounding friends; last of all, of the worthy couple to whom she felt indebted for more than life. She left them, however, with none of her good mother's melancholy forebodings; determining never to marry, unless Talbot regained his liberty: he, she knew, would never have the cruelty to take her from these guardians of her youth.

They reached Dublin early on the fourth day; where they found lodgings

taken for them in Gardiner Street, near Mountjoy Square.

Listowel visited them the day after their arrival, accompanied by Doctor Berry, who felt for Louisa an anxiety almost parental; and considered her the most beautiful, and the most interesting young person he had ever seen; particularly interesting to him, as he felt, in preserving Listowel's secret, he made himself in a manner accountable for its success.

Travelling and change of air had already recovered Louisa; Talbot's presence had restored her spirits, and no trace of her former illness now remained, but a little delicacy.

The scene was so perfectly new to her; such a change, from the neighbourhood of Killarney to the gay metropolis, that Mrs. Jackson had some trouble to keep her from the window: when Talbot or Edward was expected, she would go there in hopes of seeing them; and then,

the variety of people, their dress, to her so novel, rivetted her attention. Even the very cries amused her. She was in that happy season of life when enjoyment is most perfect; when the spirits are elastic and animated; and when every thing causes an emotion, and is anticipated with satisfaction.

Listowel employed the first masters, to give her that polish he knew her mother would value; and which, with an understanding highly cultivated as hers was, he did not doubt she had tact sufficient soon to acquire.

In about ten days after their arrival, as Robert Belmont was going up Hardwick Street, he heard a quick step after him; his arm was gently pulled by a beautiful girl, dressed rather fantastically; her face was familiar to him, but he could not bring her name to his recollection, until, in an accent broad, rich, and full, that proved the speaker from the *kingdom* of Kerry, he recog-

nised his old acquaintance, Judith Donahoe.

"Master *Bob*, is it you yourself? Have I not been running after you all up the street?"

He was delighted to see her; and chucking her under the chin, swore she was beautiful, but that her fine clothes prevented him from knowing her.

"Of all the birds of the air, your honour least of all expected to see me?"

"You are right;—have you fled away by yourself? or, have all the nest flown with you?" inquired Belmont.

"If you mean entirely to make us birds," replied she, laughing, "I must tell you, the *ould* pair at home were too *heavy of wing;* but the young one and myself have come in a pretty machine, for all the world like a cage, with good Mrs. Jackson."

"Where do you lodge, my pretty one?"

"Why, indeed, that is,—I went of a

message for Miss *Lowsey*, and thought, when I should remark the way going, there would be no delay in finding it on my return."

"Tell me the street? and I will go with you," said Belmont.

"Why, indeed, I forget what particular street," said Judith. "I know it is *contagious* to a place they call a square; and then I passed a bridge, with a vast throng of people on it,—just as if there was a *pattern*, or a fair, or something extraordinary going forward. I watched them near hand five minutes, till I feared there would never be an end of them."

"Where did you go then?" asked Belmont.

"To a very inviting place, where *ould* women were sitting with hats upon their heads, and *ilegant* baskets of apples before them; but never a one would they give Judy, but for the lucre of gain; nothing for nothing in *this here* place."

"Do not complain of that, I will treat you," said her friend.

"Its going home I must be now, if you will put me at the street," said Judith.

"Tell me its name, and I will?" said Belmont, highly diverted.

"*Och!* dear sir, but its hard for a poor body to remember all the outlandish names; Brian told me the name when he left me at the shop, but I forget,—if your honour would just mention all the streets, I will stop you, when you hit the right nail on the head."

Belmont laughed heartily at the task set him; but, anxious to obtain information, he obeyed; the first he mentioned was Gardiner Street, she stopped him in great glee; saying—"Well, that is *cute* of you!"

"Which is it, Upper or Lower?" asked Belmont.

"*Och!* we will not quarrel about that. Put me in the street—I will soon show you the house. The lady that owns it, says it is *contagious* to the side

of the square, where the sun shines; and there is a power of quality walking up and down with their sweethearts, like flies in the sun, and there is a great *buz!*"

From this description he brought her to Upper Gardiner Street. She knew the house immediately, and gave him a pressing invitation to visit her ladies; who, she said, would be delighted to see any one they had known at the Glebe. Thus encouraged, he could not but inquire for the ladies. They were not at home; he therefore left his compliments, saying, he would call again.

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